



THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO

Social Media Marketing

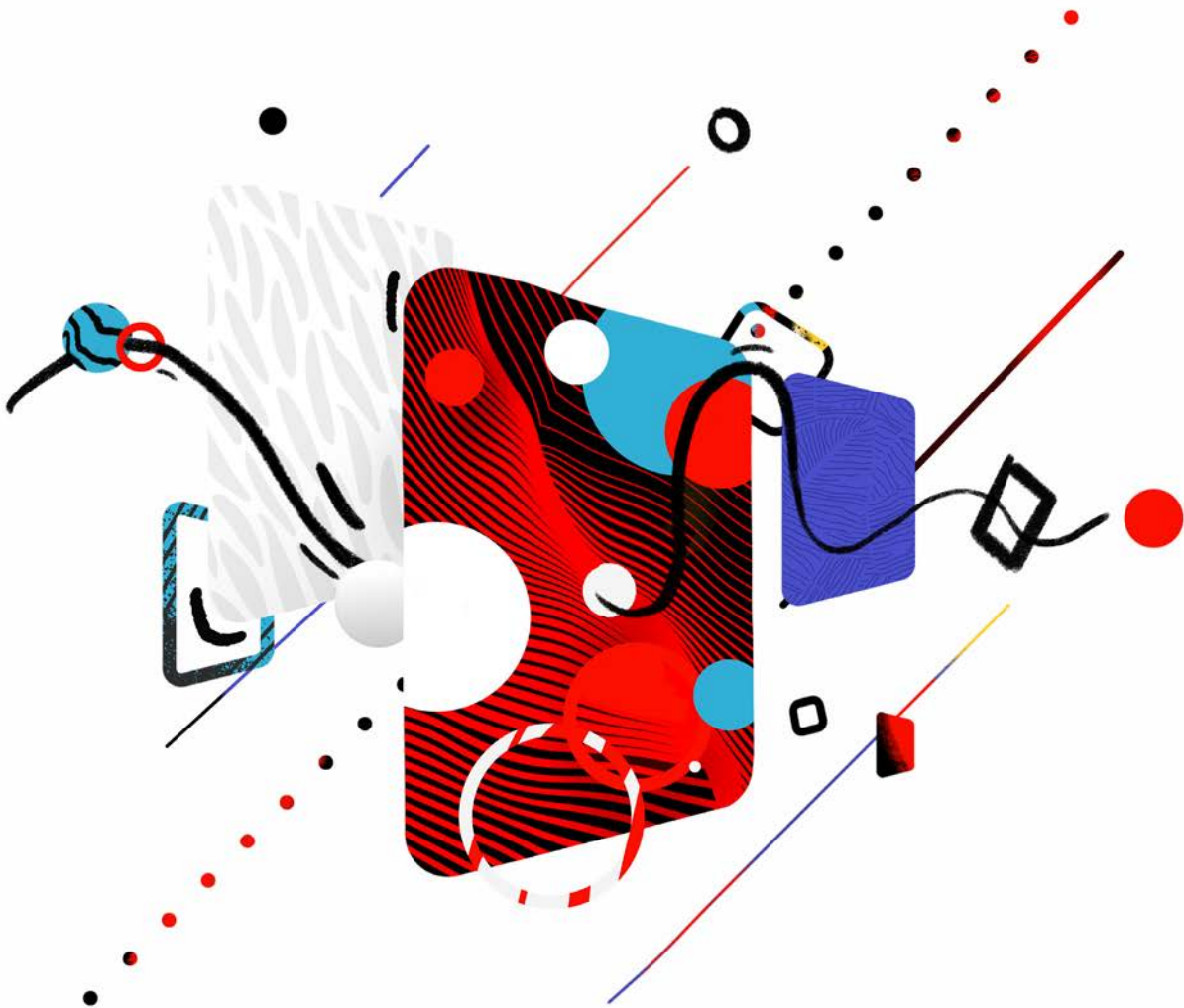
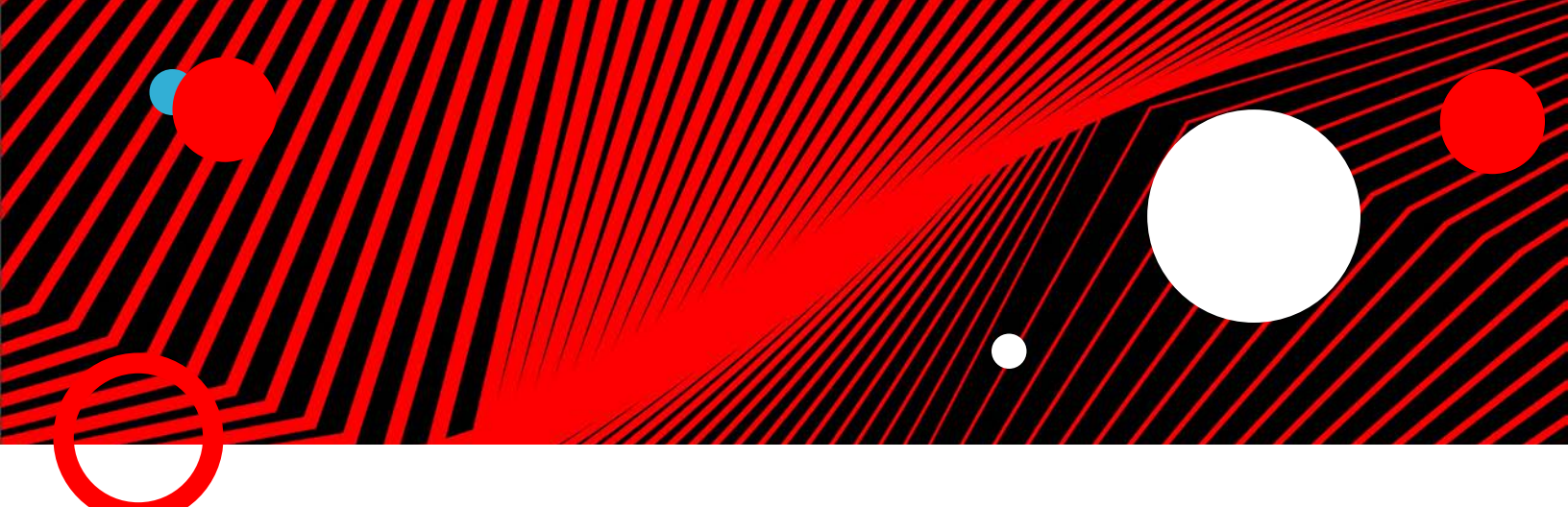


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1. Everything you need to know about social media

Social media and business—a perfect fit

Whether or not you give social media a thumbs up, it's one of the most powerful and cost-effective ways to reach and engage with your customers. Social media is almost universally used by both consumers and brands. As a marketer, it's important to have a thorough understanding of it.

According to Statista, social media activity is higher than ever, with 2.77 billion users in 2019.

Social media platforms have come a long way. Today, they've evolved from merely a means of social connection into a powerful tool where brands can connect with buyers and engage in instantaneous two-way conversations. Social media is now a necessary part of a business's digital presence, and users expect to see their favorite brands on all the platforms they use. That's why social media marketing plays a critical role in the success of every business.

Social media marketing offers vast opportunities to engage with your buyers across the entire customer lifecycle. To stay competitive, it's critical that you know how to leverage social media marketing to build your brand, drive demand, and engage your buyer.

“ The first rule of social media is that everything changes all the time. What won't change is the community's desire to network.

Kami Huyse

CEO of Zoetica Media

Social media marketing defined

Social media marketing uses social media platforms to communicate and engage with people—regardless of the goal of that engagement.

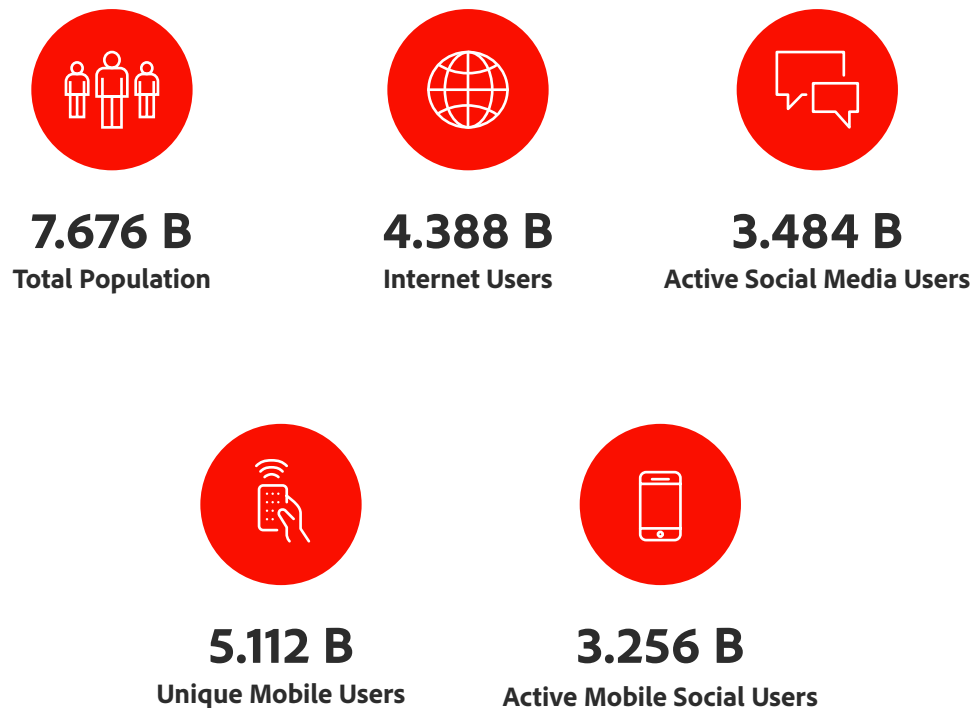
Because of its rapid rise and prevalence, social media marketing has become a global phenomenon and a ubiquitous part of a marketer's toolkit.

It's important to understand that social media marketing is more than the platforms you may be familiar with, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter. There are many more platforms and activities you can—and should—explore to reach your target audiences, engage them with relevant messages, and build lasting relationships.

Social media marketing can be done organically, with posts that are displayed to your audience based on the platform's algorithms. Or, you can choose to augment your organic reach with paid advertising. This makes it more likely that your target audience will see your post.

Global Digital Snapshot

A snapshot of the world's key digital statistical indicators



Source: Hootsuite and We Are Social

Why social media marketing is essential

The impact of social media transcends almost every aspect of our daily lives—work, politics, breaking news, and more. The rise in social media use by consumers and marketers means that participation is no longer an option. It's a necessity. With a majority of consumers actively using social media, you need to meet your audience where they are.

To get the most value from your social media marketing, you need to use it to drive value across every stage of the customer lifecycle.

Social media for brand research

Percentages of global internet users who use the following methods to find out more about brands:

■ Gen Z ■ All Internet users

Search Engines:

Gen Z: 47%

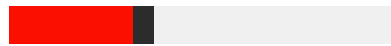
All Internet users: 51%



Consumer reviews:

Gen Z: 32%

All Internet users: 36%



Social networks:

Gen Z: 47%

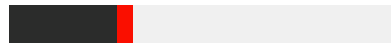
All Internet users: 42%



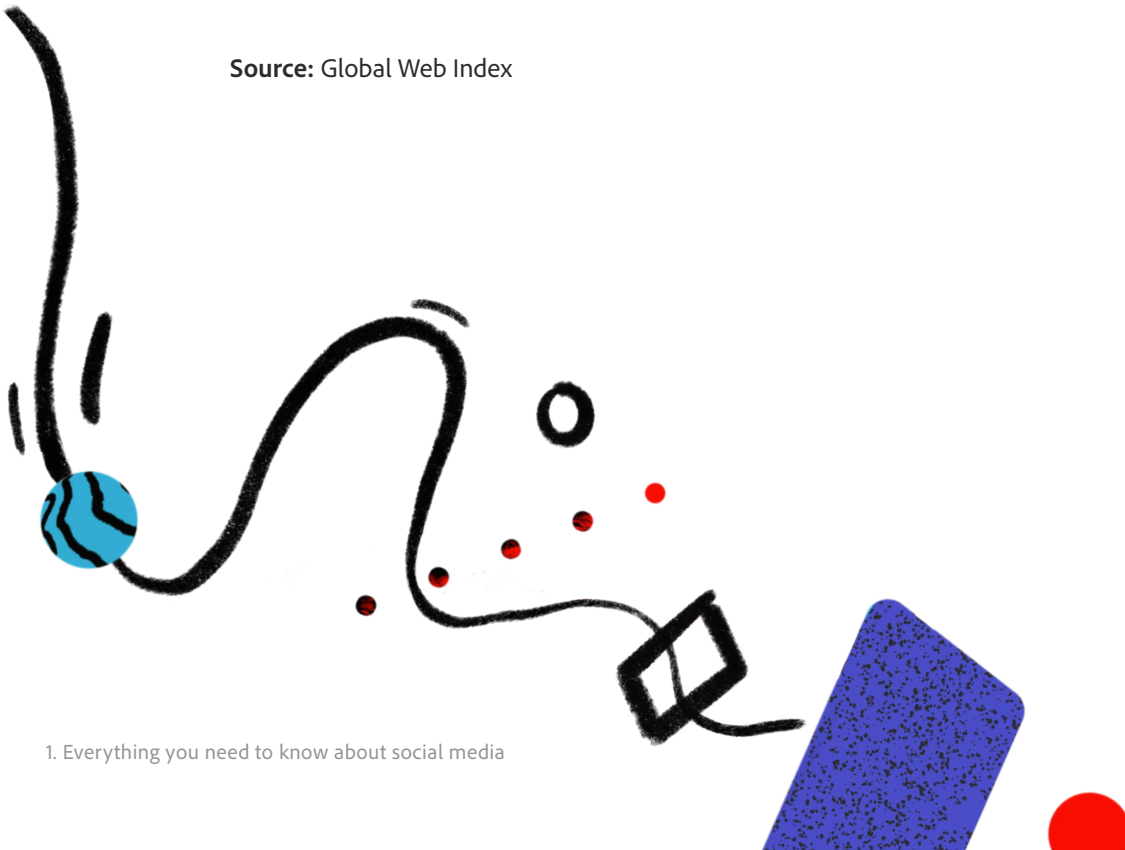
Mobile apps:

Gen Z: 32%

All Internet users: 28%



Source: Global Web Index



Social media increases demand

Social media offers more than just a way to reinforce your brand.

It's also very effective for bringing in new marketable contacts for your database and nurturing them across all channels—which can drive increased conversions and sales.

With social media, you can develop content, offers, promotions, and contests that engage your audience more deeply and result in more conversions—from a form fill to a purchase.

Social selling

Social selling is a great way to connect with your buyers. Your social media marketing and sales team can reach out to people on a one-to-one level and offer them personal and relevant content, as well as messages and offers that lead them toward a purchase.

SEO

Search engine optimization (SEO) is a strategic activity that can help you boost your organic search rankings on search engines like Google. An important part of getting people to your website is your ranking in organic search results, which is where SEO comes in.

While social media and SEO may not work directly together to build your website's page ranking, social media is one of the easiest and most effective ways to push out your content. The incoming links from your social media shares can impact your bounce rate and time-on-site engagement, which can improve your SEO.

If your content is good and people stick around to read it, those engagement metrics communicate value to search engines.

“ As social media becomes more personal, social selling, when practiced correctly, is becoming a very real channel to engage people with.

John Jantsch

Speaker, Author of *Duct Tape Marketing*, *The Referral Engine*, and *The Commitment Engine*

Omnichannel campaigns

Social media does not work in a silo. Many great brands use social networks as critical components of their marketing mix and communications. But it's important to understand that social media marketing is most effective when its messages and content support and reinforce other marketing channels. Coordinated messages across channels allow you to carry on a continuous conversation with your audience over time.

Networking and peer-to-peer influence

One of the best ways to connect with your audience is to give them a compelling reason to share your message with their networks. Word-of-mouth marketing and peer recommendations are extremely powerful ways to increase brand visibility through social proof, since people believe in the credibility of their social networks as opposed to branded campaigns.

According to Digital Consulting Strategy, trust is an engagement factor in every product or service category, and has become the indispensable connective tissue between brands and customer loyalty. Because people view any brand-to-buyer communication as an advertisement, your customers are likely to be skeptical. If your target audience's friends and colleagues are talking positively about your product or service, you are more likely to gain their trust than by running an ad campaign.

The annual Edelman Trust Barometer evaluates consumer trust in brands. In 2018, only 48 percent of US respondents said they trust businesses. And a study by Talk Triggers shows Americans value word-of-mouth recommendations from friends and family 41 percent more than social media recommendations.

“ Smart, innovative companies are leveraging thought leaders throughout their entire marketing strategy in order to pull in new audiences.

Joe Pulizzi

Founder, Content Marketing Institute

What good social media marketing requires

Look at this checklist to make sure you have all your bases covered when starting or improving your social media marketing strategy:

- Create clear goals
- Have dedicated and trained staff
- Produce enough relevant, quality content
- Understand the social platforms and sites your audience prefers
- Equip your other channels with the ability to share to social
- Commit to making every campaign social
- Track metrics to get insights about your social media campaigns

Social media is more than an add-on—it adds real value

Brand awareness and peer-to-peer sharing are important, but social media marketing is more than a soft metrics channel. Today, it drives real, trackable revenue. The level of innovation on social media platforms also allows you to try new approaches to reach and engage your target audiences.

With the right tools, like marketing automation and a social media management platform, you can listen and respond to your audience across channels. You can also track the revenue associated with your social media marketing activities, making their impact crystal clear.

Throughout the pages of this guide, you'll learn everything you need to know to get up and running with social media marketing. But remember that, as with all technology, social media is always evolving. As you take steps to make your social media marketing all it can be, pay close attention to changes and trends so you can evolve with the times.

The six stages of the customer journey



Awareness



Engagement



Purchase



**Retention &
Loyalty**



Growth



Advocacy



2. Creating a winning social media strategy

Understand your audiences

Before you jump into the tactical and practical details of your social media plan, it's critical that you take the time to understand your audiences. Who are they? What do they care about? This section will walk you through how to answer these questions so you know exactly who you're talking to on your chosen social media platforms.

Build personas

To understand your audiences—from prospects to current customers—you'll want to create personas. Personas are simply representations of your main types of customers, categorized and defined. They make it easier to understand your full audience by combining together the most prevalent characteristics in your customer base.

Often, this information is already available from work you have done to segment and target audiences in other marketing channels. In that case, you may still want to go back and examine if those personas truly represent the audiences you'll encounter on social media. Listening to your audiences on social media can be a helpful way to confirm whether your personas are a good fit. It helps you understand in real time what they truly care about and like to share.

Even though you'll be creating content for particular personas, a social media best practice is to avoid being overly exclusive with content. For instance, a persona you are trying to reach might not be on social media. If that's the case, you should craft content that will be valuable to them but that is also useful and engaging to others—especially those who might come into close contact and share your ideas with your persona.

If you don't have customer personas yet or are adapting them from personas developed for different reasons, here is a set of questions to help you get started:



Questions to ask when building your customer personas:

Background

What companies are they from? What are their key job responsibilities? What are their likes and dislikes about their job? What does their team structure look like?

Goals

What are their business goals? How can your products help them achieve those goals? What are their challenges and pain points? How can you help address them?

Source of information

Where do they like to consume content (channels)? Are there specific social channels where they do and don't engage?

Preferred content topic

What content topics are they interested in?

Marketing message

Which type of messaging speaks directly to them?

Objections

What objections do you anticipate from them during the sales process?

Specific product interest

Are they interested in a particular solution or product?

Role in purchase process

What is their influence in the decision-making process?

Quotes

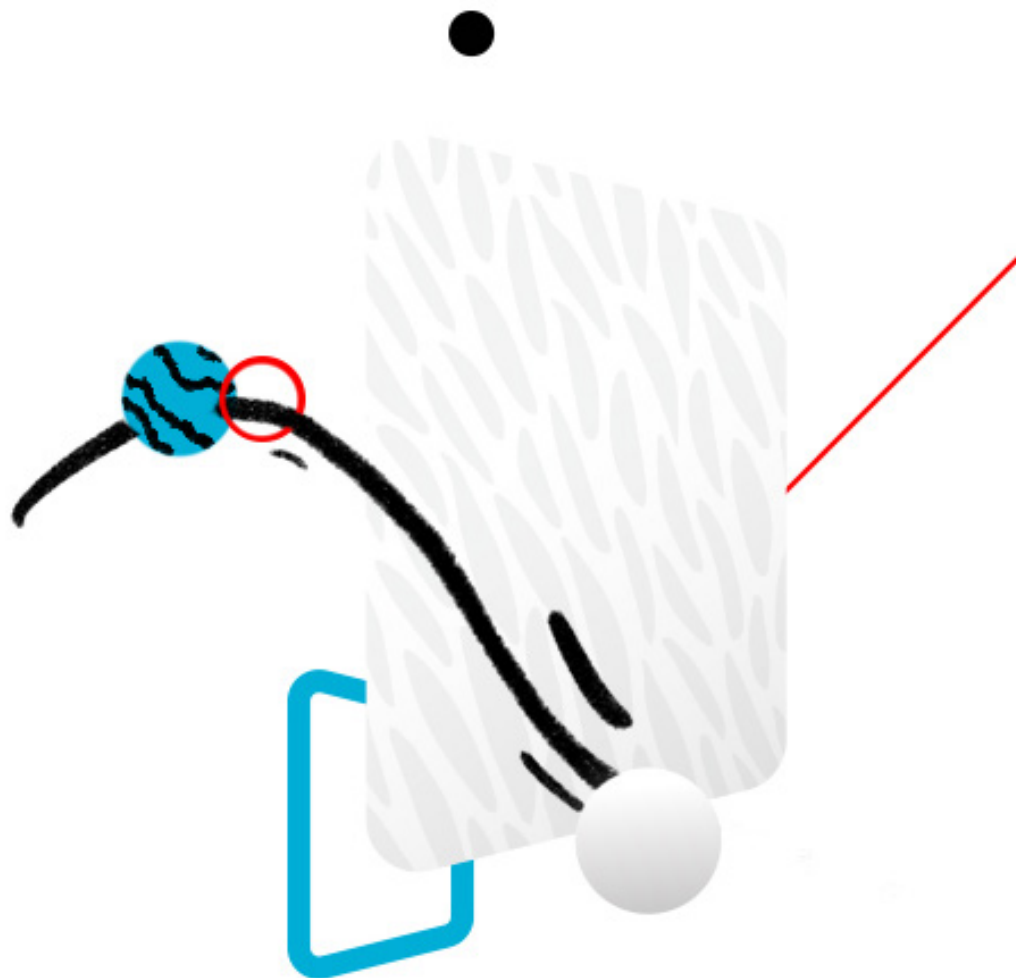
What are relevant quotes from real customers that could apply to your persona?



Most companies develop personas based on customer demographics and behaviors—in addition to using their own understanding of customer motivations and challenges. To distill all this into a persona, you can conduct qualitative interviews and surveys of your customers and salespeople. You can also analyze the customer demographic, firmographic, behavioral, and purchase data available in your marketing automation platform or other systems. The better you understand and humanize your buyers, the more relevant your marketing will be.

If your business serves several types of customers, you'll want to develop multiple buyer personas. If you're a B2B organization, an example of the personas you might create could include the executive sponsor, the decision maker, and the user. Or if you're a consumer company, you could create your personas around demographic information like age, gender, income level, and region.

For most organizations, somewhere between four and six personas is ideal—but only create as many as you need. And don't be afraid to keep it simple.



Building personas pays off

Developing buyer personas requires some initial investment, but you'll reap the benefits throughout the customer lifecycle. You'll be able to use them across all your other marketing efforts to do the following:

- **Determine which kind of content you need.** If you break your existing content down by persona, you can easily see which ones have enough content and which ones need more.
- **Set the tone, style, and delivery strategies for your content.** Some buyers respond best to light, conversational voice, while others trust a more formal tone. In creating your personas, you'll find out the best tone and style for your audience.
- **Target the topics you should be writing about.** Instead of speculating about the topics your buyers care about, you could just ask. Personas will help you generate a list of relevant topics.
- **Tell you where buyers get their information and how they want to consume it.** Does your audience like to sink their teeth into 100-page guides, or do they prefer short, snappy graphics? Do they spend their time reading third-party reports, or do they comb through Twitter? This information will inform the way you create and distribute your content.

Target your messages to the lifecycle stage

Social media allows you to deliver specific types of messages that correlate to the goals you are trying to accomplish. These early-, mid-, and late-stage messages work to nudge buyers along the entire lifecycle—from awareness to advocacy.

Early: Early-stage messages on social media are fun, entertaining, and educational. These could include sharing or curating relevant news, offering helpful tips, or displaying visual content.

Mid: Mid-stage messages are educational, engaging, and

often drive toward a goal. They should build trust with your audience and get them to engage with you further. Some examples include social contests, a free subscription to a newsletter, or an invitation to an event.

Late: Late-stage messages are educational, informative, and drive conversions. However, it's still important that your message is on-brand and engaging. These messages could include a click-to-purchase, demo offer, or trial sign-up. All of these tactics drive metrics that ultimately support a conversion—whether it's new name for your CRM, a completed form, or a sale.

“Once you know your target audience, you can look at the social media landscape and see which social media platforms will work with your message and will reach your audience. It's a combination of your goals and where your audience spends their time.

Peg Fitzpatrick

Social Media Strategist and Co-author, *The Art of Social Media: Power Tips for Power Users*



Social media pitfalls to avoid

As you plan your social media strategy and activities, it's important to avoid these common pitfalls:

- **Don't go in without goals.** You need to establish your objectives, goals, and ways to measure success.
- **Don't go for the hard-sell.** Endless self-promotion will alienate your audience and irritate existing customers.
- **Don't overlook measuring your ROI.** There are concrete ways to measure your impact, which we'll cover later.
- **Don't assume every social media site is good for your business.** It's critical to understand how and when your buyers are using social media. Social media requires you to actively engage with your audience and can become a resource drain if you're on too many channels.
- **Don't create a presence on a social site and then abandon it.** Creating a presence means finding and building engagement with your audience. It's a continuous process that takes time, but is well worth the effort.

Map your goals and messaging to the customer lifecycle

As with any marketing strategy, it's important to start by defining your goals. To do this, we recommend identifying your social media marketing goals for each stage of the customer lifecycle. This creates a foundation for a solid social media strategy that's flexible enough to react to an individual's buyer journey, while also providing a road map for determining which platforms, messages, and offers make sense for your buyer.

In this section, we will look at how to define your goals for each stage of the customer lifecycle and the types of messages that will engage your audience.



“ Fully understand the goals and questions your potential customers have at each stage. If you do that, you can effectively guide customers no matter where they choose to get their information and engage.

John Jantsch

Author of *Duct Tape Marketing*, *The Referral Engine*, and *The Commitment Engine*

The six stages of the customer lifecycle

Whenever you communicate with your audience, it's important to keep the buyer journey and customer lifecycle in mind—from awareness through advocacy. Understanding where each individual is in their unique journey allows you to have relevant conversations with them.

Your buyers have a goal—to fill a need or solve a problem. To help them achieve it, you need to understand the different stages of the customer lifecycle, identify where each buyer is in their journey, present a call-to-action (CTA), and tie each of your marketing activities to business outcomes.

At Adobe, we break down the customer lifecycle into six main stages: Awareness, engagement, purchase, retention and loyalty, growth, and advocacy. A buyer's journey is rarely linear, so they often move between stages, both forward and backward. Understanding the stages can shape your social media marketing goals.

1. Awareness

This is the beginning of the customer lifecycle, where good branding, a high ranking on search engines, and a strong social media presence are useful. Your goal in this phase is to drive brand awareness and capture audience interest. Reaching customers on the right channels with relevant, personalized messages is critical. For your social media marketing, this means offering plenty of early-stage messages and having a thorough understanding of the social media platforms your buyers use.

2. Engagement

In the engagement phase, buyers have displayed interest in your company and are potential customers. Your goal is to listen to their behaviors and then engage them with targeted messages to nudge them toward the next conversion. This includes creating specific offers and nurture tracks based on their preferences. Useful content is a great way to maintain a connection with your audience, educate them, and ultimately build a lasting relationship. For social media marketing, this means incorporating mid-stage messages into your editorial mix. You should also use paid advertising to target specific audiences with content and offers that will push them forward to make a purchase.

3. Purchase

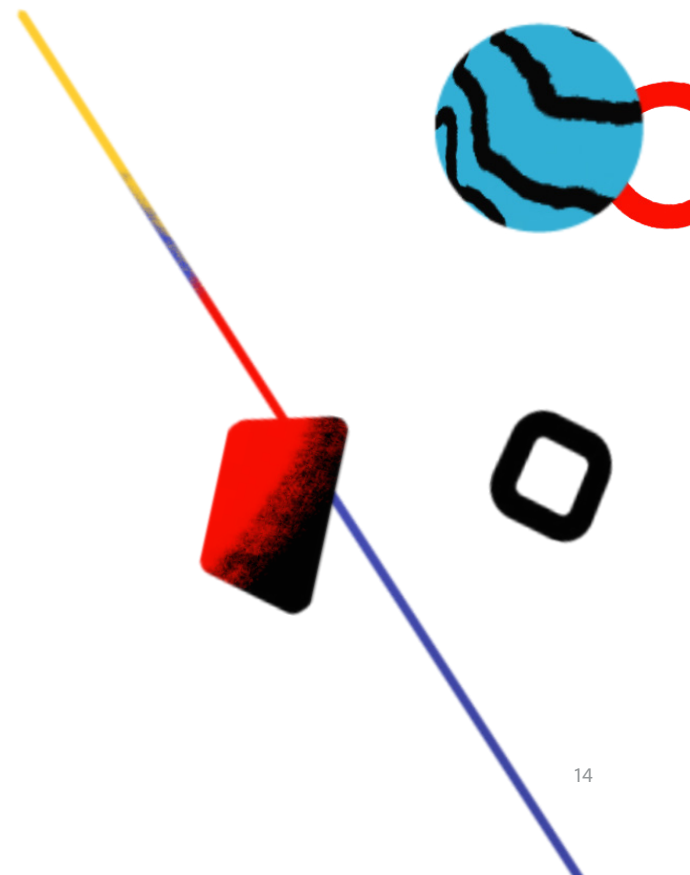
When your buyers are ready to purchase, your job is to make the process as convenient as possible. Monitor your purchase process to ensure easy transactions—especially for your new customers. If other teams are involved, such as sales or support, align your communications so that you're guiding your buyers through the transaction.

4. Retention and loyalty

Converting a buyer into a customer is considered a success for most marketers. Yet creating trusting, long-term relationships with your customers is one of the most effective ways to increase revenue. For social media, this means understanding that your customers are part of your audience. You need to keep delivering value with relevant content and messages. It also means having a plan and process for customer service issues so you can rapidly respond and deliver on your brand promise.

5. Growth

Marketing doesn't end after the sale. Continue to provide value to your customers by identifying meaningful cross-sell and upsell opportunities. You can use your marketing automation platform to segment your current customers and share that list with digital advertising platforms, allowing you to target current customers with new offers.



6. Advocacy

Engaging with customers throughout their lifecycle isn't just about individual value—it's also about the value of their networks. Turning your loyal customers into advocates can expand your reach and promote your brand. It's important that you treat your existing customers well by continuing to engage them with special perks and incentives. Your goal is to offer a great customer experience that encourages them to become brand advocates. You'll want to recognize and acknowledge your advocates with special offers, promotions, or even sharing their posts.

Why market across the entire lifecycle?

<20%

The probability of selling to a prospect

>60%

The probability of selling to an existing customer

49%

of marketers that say they achieve a higher ROI by focusing on engagement

67%

of repeat customers spend more than new customers

Source: Marketing Metrics and Bain & Company

Creating content for social media

Now that you've identified your social media goals across the entire customer lifecycle, it's time to start achieving them.

Because of the immediate, one-to-one nature of social media marketing, your buyers expect your brand to behave like any other person on the platform. That means your content needs to not only offer value, but also meet their expectations.

With the proliferation of marketing messages people encounter every day, the only way to get your audience's attention is with content that offers relevant, useful, and valuable information they'll want to engage with and share.

Content that meets these expectations and maps to the stages of the customer lifecycle will help you grow your social media presence and hit your objectives.

Social media standards and code of ethics

The ethics of social media can be hard to pin down. It's a good idea for businesses that are using social media to set up a code of ethics before diving in. While there are various guides to the ethics of social media available online, there's no better place to look to than your company's mission, vision, and values. When your social media usage is in line with your company's point of view, you'll be in a better position to connect authentically with your audience.

“ Great social is really about great content. The campaigns that really stand out are those with content that compels the user to participate, to engage, to share, to amplify. Think about how you can make your audience part of the content. Starbucks does a great job of this.

Matt Heinz

President, Heinz Marketing



Define your writing style for social media

Your content should be driven by the target personas you are trying to reach on your social channels and your objectives for each stage of the customer lifecycle.

Based on your assessment in the earlier section on personas, you should have a solid understanding of what tone, style, and delivery strategies to use. If you're targeting practitioners, you could use a conversational voice on Twitter or Facebook. If you're trying to reach executives, a formal voice on a professional network like LinkedIn may be more appropriate.

Whoever your target audience is, make sure you understand which objectives each piece of content helps you achieve. Does a particular asset help increase brand affinity? You may want to promote that post both organically and through paid promotion to increase its reach. Is an asset intended to be educational and useful? Perhaps you should promote it to audiences who have previously interacted with your brand.

Creating impactful content

Every piece of content you create should have an intended audience. That audience may be broad, but you should still understand every persona you're speaking to. Make sure to consider their needs and interests so your content provides them with value.

Let's explore what this looks like for the audiences of a B2B organization. Practitioners would likely be interested in actionable content that walks them through "how-to" steps for accomplishing a task. But executives are more likely to be interested in content that addresses higher-level strategy and best practices.

Regardless of whether your asset has a broad or targeted audience, there are a few things that you can do to create more relevant content. You can start by applying the four Rs—Reorganize, rewrite, retire, and redesign.

“ It used to be that we created paid ads, shared those on social media, and hoped they earned organic or 'owned' brand engagement. That model has flipped. Now, brands are creating great stories on their own platforms. If the content is good, it 'earns' social shares. Then paid promotion is placed behind it to maximize reach. Ultimately, it all starts with great content!

Michael Brenner

CEO, Marketing Insider Group

Scale your content for social

Use the four Rs

The key to great social media marketing is content that fuels the conversations and interactions you want to have. So, you may need to get creative in how you resource your team and create that content. The four Rs of content marketing for social will help you post great content while maximizing the value of your team and saving money.



Reorganize

Maximize your efficiency and use sections of one piece of content to create smaller breakout pieces. For example, you could break up an infographic into different visuals (such as important stats and charts) to share on your social channels, and then include a link to the full infographic in your caption.



Rewrite

Extend your investment by using pieces that already exist. Take a look at your content library and determine where you can rewrite and reuse relevant information. Even if an asset is outdated, there may still be relevant takeaways that your audience will find valuable.



Redesign

In some cases, all your content needs is a fresh design. Your asset can feel old because the visuals are no longer on trend. Sometimes you can simply update the design of an existing asset to make it relevant for a segment of your audience or a certain persona.



Retire

Sometimes it's best to remove content that's outdated. Social media sharing is instantaneous, and the last thing you want to do is make your brand appear out of the loop.



When you create a great video or blog that resonates with your audience, too often, marketers stop there. You must take that content and turn it into other pieces that fit other social platforms. For example, if you have a great Facebook Live video, take the best one-minute clip and share it on Instagram.

Brian Fanzo

Change Evangelist & CEO, iSocialFanz, LLC

Create a variety of content

To keep your audience engaged, your content needs to be shareable on social media while still helping you achieve your goals.

Content is a great way to show your expertise and your personality, and it can have multiple purposes—from building your audience's perception of your brand to thought leadership to simply posting fun, shareable pieces.

When you think about what types of content to create, it's important to first understand where you will be sharing it. Many social media platforms lend themselves more naturally to specific types of content. Also think about what types of content your audience consumes and engages with most readily.

Your content can take many forms, and your mix may look different depending on your business type, audience, and the platforms you choose to engage with.

Common types of content:

- Blog posts
- Tip sheets and checklists
- Infographics
- Long-form content (like eBooks and whitepapers)
- Photos and videos
- Fun visual content (like memes and comics)
- Slideshows
- Podcasts

“ One-size content doesn't work, and of course neither does the same content across all social networks. There are specific content considerations for the campaign, the brand's audience, and the distinct organic networks built up on each channel.

Lee Odden
CEO, TopRank Marketing

Emoji marketing—thumbs up or thumbs down?

People process visual information much faster than text, so using emojis in your social media messages can help your audience grasp your message quickly, especially if they're scanning through their feed. However, it can be easy to go overboard with emojis, so it's important to follow these tips:

1. **Use emojis tastefully.** Emojis should help demonstrate your message, not be your entire message. Publishing posts with emojis making up most of the content can leave room for misinterpretation.
2. **Use emojis for the right audience.** If you're building brand awareness and publishing fun or educational content, emojis can add more flavor to your post. On the other hand, if you're trying to reach the C-suite with high-level messaging, it might be best to leave them out.
3. **Use emojis in the right context.** Your emojis should complement your message, not contradict it. Before you use emojis in your marketing, do a little research on whether they mean the same thing to different people.

“ Regulated brands will likely have to take more conversations offline than a retailer or restaurant, but that doesn't mean they still can't be personable, empathetic, and helpful in public via social media.

Dan Gingiss
Co-Host, *Focus on Customer Service Podcast*

Define your content mix

Content is your fuel for engaging with your audience on social media. To get the best performance, it's important to have the right kind of content. And that starts with a content strategy.

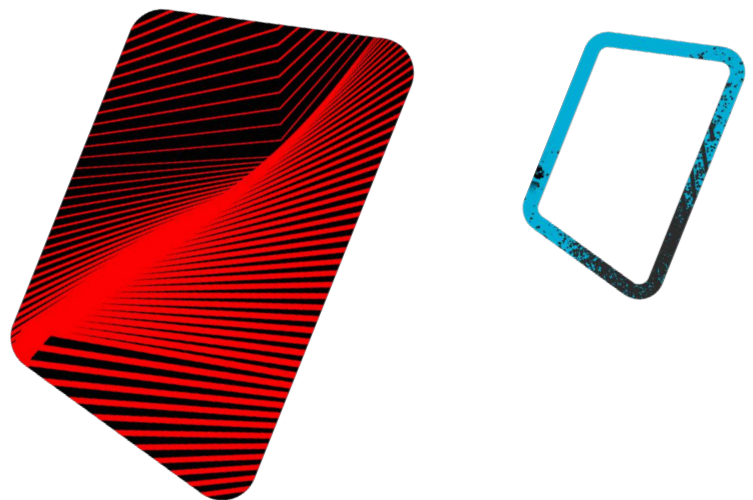
As you assess and develop content for social media, think about how you will distribute it. One example of a common social media distribution framework is the 4-1-1 rule. This rule states that for every four educational or entertaining posts (like an infographic, blog, awareness-level eBook), you can share one soft/mid-level promotion (like a more solution-focused asset), and one hard or late-stage promotion (like a demo).

This mix allows you to offer value that far outweighs the sales element of your mid- and late-stage promotions. It also educates and entertains your audience so they're more receptive to receiving your later-stage messages. Not only will you be engaging in conversations with your audience, you'll also be building awareness, credibility, and trust. It's an effective way to keep in touch with your followers without coming across as pushy or "salesy." Your audience's trust—ultimately your most powerful selling tool—hangs in the balance.

“ The 4-1-1 rule applies to brands on social media, in part because it fundamentally reminds us that being a resource to others is the best way to market. (It's a good rule for life, too, isn't it?)

Ann Handley

Chief Content Officer, MarketingProfs



The power of visuals

Photos

Sharing photos and images can be a big plus for companies. It lets you record and increase the visibility of company events, industry conferences, user groups, and more. Plus, social audiences—both prospects and customers—love visual content.

You can build a visual vocabulary for social media that defines your brand in the same way a traditional voice style guide does. Here are the top three reasons you should use photos and images in your social media marketing campaigns:

1. Images appeal to emotions

Visual content strikes an emotional chord with customers that text often can't. The simplicity of photo and image sharing applications makes this appeal even greater.

2. Images creates intimacy

Photos help humanize your company. It's quicker, easier, and more effective to convey your authentic brand through images than text.

3. Images engage

Photo and image sharing applications engage your audience by drawing attention to your post and providing an opportunity to react and interact with the content.

“ Visual content is more than **40x more likely** to get shared on social media than other types of content.

Buffer

“ Content with relevant images gets **94% more views** than content without relevant images.

KISSMetrics

“ The average video post generates **135 greater** organic reach, when compared to photo posts.

Social Bakers

“ People following directions with text and illustrations do **323% better** than people following directions without illustrations.

NeoMam



Every post, other than a response or comment, should have a picture or video. That's one of the most important things to remember.

Guy Kawasaki

Chief Evangelist, Canvas

Videos

Video is now an essential part of any successful social media marketing strategy. According to Wyzowl, 77 percent of consumers say they've been convinced to buy a product or service by watching a video. Videos can help you achieve a range of outcomes, from awareness and engagement to conversion and retention.

Video content is most valuable when it offers a real-time look into your brand activities. Show—don't just tell—customers about your products, your customers, or even the inner workings of your business. Try choosing a few types of videos to share, and stick to them. Consistency, as well as a curated selection of videos, will keep customers engaged.

When creating and adapting video for your social media marketing, the first step is to understand the goals you're aiming to achieve. Some videos will simply entertain—building brand affinity, awareness, and engagement. Others will educate and guide customers toward another purchase, which builds retention.

To ensure good visibility for your videos, there are several ways you can optimize them:

Use customer-centric titles

Put careful thought into the titles your customers might search for and what will catch their attention as they're scrolling through their feeds.

Include video descriptions with targeted keywords

Use the description field to add relevant keywords for your buyer and your brand. If your video aims to drive conversions, such as a purchase or download, it's a best practice to include a shortened link with a CTA driving traffic to your website or a landing page with a specific offer.

Encourage likes and comments

Your goal should be to generate as many “thumbs-up” ratings and comments as you can for brand awareness and SEO purposes.

Commenting on other popular videos in your niche is another way to generate more comments and ratings for yourself. Making comments that spur other viewers to engage is also a great opportunity to present yourself as an expert.

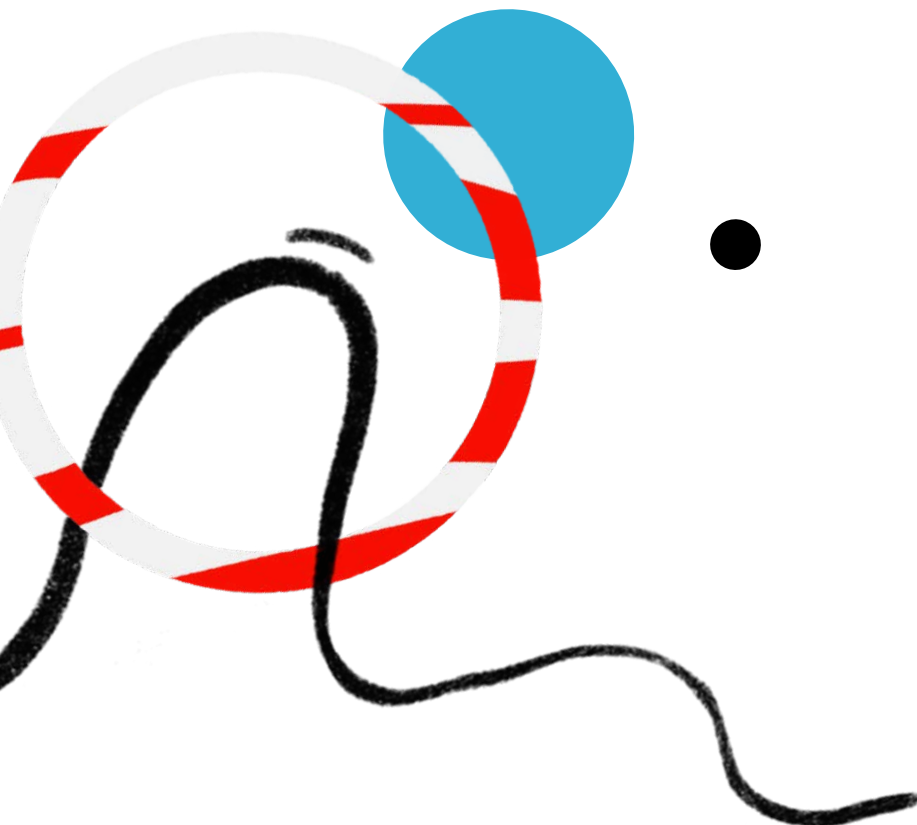
Increase social shares

You should always be thinking about how to make your content more shareable, and video content is a great way to do that. Videos have high share rates compared to other types of assets, so it's a good idea to integrate them whenever possible.

Determine which videos would be useful to prospects and customers, and include the links in your emails, blog posts, and other outbound communications. Also, use links or embed codes on other channels and include them on your website.

Promotional and sales-focused videos can be useful in moderation. Unlike whitepapers, which are limited to static pages, videos can be presented in a variety of ways:

- Product demos
- Webinars
- Whiteboard sessions
- Customer testimonials
- Speaking engagements
- Holiday video cards
- Vlog entries
- User-generated content
- Company culture videos





3. Choosing the right social media platforms

So many platforms, so many things to know

There are many different social media platforms you can use to reach and engage with your audience. In this section, we will cover some of the core platforms your business can leverage.

Many social media platforms have capabilities that overlap, yet they're all continually evolving to improve the user experience. As with any of your marketing campaigns, the best platforms to use are the ones where your buyers are. Keep your audience and objectives in mind as you choose which platforms to focus on. Some are better suited for meeting your early customer lifecycle stage objectives, while others have more advanced targeting options that allow you to reach buyers at every stage.

As you navigate the social media landscape, it's important to have a solid understanding of each platform's features and capabilities. This will help you determine which ones to use. The thing to remember is that you have to do more than simply post on these sites. You must continuously engage and build relationships with your audience—and change platforms as they do.

Reminder

The content you share on each of these social media platforms will vary depending on the target personas you are trying to reach and your objectives for each stage of the customer lifecycle.

Facebook

Facebook is one of the most widely used social media platforms. According to Statista, it has more than 2.6 billion monthly active users. Facebook's continued success can largely be attributed to its focus on user experience and its ability to navigate the shift to a mobile-first world.

Facebook offers more than just a way to stay in touch with friends, family, and colleagues—it's also an essential tool to connect with your buyers.

Since it officially created a space for brands in 2007, it has continued to change the ways marketers engage with their audiences. Facebook allows your business to be accessible to people on a trusted, popular platform, where potential customers can not only engage with your brand, but also see people in their network interacting with you. This sets the stage for you to build stronger, more authentic relationships with them.

“ It all comes back to asking yourself how you can make your story relevant to that space. Learning to adapt to evolving technologies will change the way that we connect with people and tell our stories.

Bryan Kramer
CEO, TopRank Marketing

“ I believe too many marketers are creating strategies focused on where their audience is today. Not only does that not embrace change, but it forgets to factor in where your audience will be tomorrow.

Brian Fanzo
Change Evangelist & CEO, iSocialFanz, LLC

How to get your post seen

What you need to know about Facebook's News Feed algorithm:

Changes to Facebook's algorithm over time have had an impact on organic impressions. Now, posting for the sake of posting can actually hurt your chances of being seen. Facebook is very user-centric and continually optimizes its platform to ensure that the News Feed helps users connect to stories that matter most to them. Posting overly promotional content will cause your page's organic distribution to fall over time.

To ensure that customers see your posts, it's important to understand the following issues and how to overcome them:

Time spent reading a post: In the past, brands could manipulate their engagement rates by running a contest in which users were required to like, share, or comment on a post. But today, this no longer works. Facebook measures the number of seconds a user spends on each post to understand whether the content resonated with them. If individuals spend more time on a particular post compared to others, it's a good indicator that it was important to them.

Time spent with content: Facebook starts measuring this after your content has fully loaded and only measures to a certain threshold so longer articles don't get ranked higher. For the best results, make sure to provide users with timely, relevant, and valuable content they will actually read.

Actions on videos: Behavior differs a bit for video, and people don't necessarily like, comment, or share videos they enjoy. Facebook counts other actions as metrics of success, such as how long someone watches a video and whether they turn on the sound, make the video full screen, or enable high-definition. Relevance is key—think about sharing fun, educational, or humorous video content that is immediately engaging.

Diversity of posts: Facebook discovered that people enjoy reading articles from a wide range of publishers, so they're reducing how often people see several posts in a row from the same source. This means that it benefits you to spread your posts throughout the day to increase the chances of them getting seen by your audience.

Reduction of clickbait headlines: *You won't believe what happened next...* Clickbaiting is when a publisher posts a link with a headline that's misleading or leaves out important information to get users to click on it. While these posts get a lot of clicks, Facebook research shows that 80 percent of the time, people prefer headlines that are more informative. So instead, Facebook looks at how long people spend reading the article and the ratio of people clicking on the content compared to people discussing and sharing it. Facebook has also identified phrases that are commonly used in clickbait headlines to determine which posts are clickbait and which web domains they're coming from. Links shared from those pages or domains will appear lower in the News Feed until they stop posting clickbait headlines.

Important Facebook features

Tabs and apps

Tabs and apps appear in two places on your Facebook page—in the navigation bar under your page's cover photo and on the left side of your timeline. Tabs come with your page and help users navigate through content such as photos, videos, and events. Tabs can also be used to host a variety of apps, which help businesses extend their capabilities directly on their Facebook pages. These include contests, offers, links to your other social accounts, and more.

Facebook groups

The group feature is useful for demonstrating someone's passion or expertise in a topic while connecting them to like-minded people. For example, company employees can join groups dedicated to their industry to share ideas and insights with their peers.

Facebook Live video

Facebook Live videos are video posts that you can share in real-time on your timeline and in your followers' News Feeds—or they can be watched after the fact. You have the ability to offer a subscribe function to notify subscribers whenever you start a live broadcast. Live videos are a

great way to share announcements, do interviews, cover events, and share educational broadcasts. This gives you the opportunity to share what you're thinking and doing right now with your fans and audience.

Facebook Stories

Facebook Stories includes photos or videos that followers can see in a dedicated "stories" section for 24 hours. Brands can post content with filters and emojis to increase engagement.

It's especially useful during an event where you'd like to post a lot of timely content in a short amount of time.

TIPS FOR USING FACEBOOK

- Create engaging cover photos to promote large assets, announcements, or events. The cover photo is typically the first thing a user sees when they visit your Facebook page, so upload an image that is on brand and makes good use of that space. To make your cover image especially eye-catching, you also have the option to upload a video.
- Use tabs to promote assets, a landing page, or other important items.
- Incorporate live video into your posts to engage your audience in the moment. Research from Facebook reveals that people spend 300 percent more time watching a Facebook Live video when it's broadcasted live compared to afterward.
- Add links to some of your posts to point to a landing page on your website.
- Take advantage of Facebook's carousel, slideshow, and canvas features to turn photos or videos of your new product or latest event into an interactive experience.

BONUS TIP

The best marketing automation solutions allow you to publish multiple landing pages directly to Facebook. Rather than redirecting Facebook visitors to your website, these pages allow you to gather data from customer behavior on Facebook in the same way that you can gather data from a page built on your marketing automation platform.

Automation users can also use Facebook Lead Ads to promote specific offers and capture lead data that syncs seamlessly with their marketing

Facebook paid advertising

Having a complete Facebook business profile and posting regular updates is an important step to building your audience. But to take full advantage of Facebook's large user base and people-based targeting options, many businesses are turning to paid promotions.

Facebook's paid promotions include boosted and promoted posts, which allow you to put paid advertising and targeting behind a post on your Facebook page.

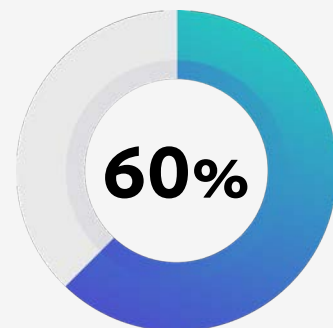
Additionally, Facebook offers advertising, which uses a traditional pay-per-click (PPC) model. Facebook limits the distribution of organic, unpaid posts, so paid advertising is the best way to reach a large audience. For more information on digital ads, check out our *Definitive Guide to Digital Advertising*.

Twitter

When Twitter hit the scene in 2007, it was considered by many to be a flash-in-the-pan social media outlet. But now the platform is a virtual watercooler where the world's news breaks and people gather to discuss politics, industry news, pop culture, and their daily musings. As of March 2019, there were 330 million monthly active Twitter users, and the number continues to grow. This social giant has proven it should be a critical part of any marketing mix.

Twitter has become a leading network for thought leadership growth and development, and a space where both corporate and personal brands can develop ongoing relationships with followers. It also serves as a popular platform for customers to air their customer service complaints.

Companies that lack a strategic, conversion-based plan of attack for their Twitter accounts are losing out on access to a huge potential customer base and an opportunity to showcase themselves in a socially savvy, relevant way. When users follow you on Twitter, it's a signal of their affinity for your business, and these self-selected audience members are indicating an active interest in your brand.



60% of Twitter users purchased from a business because of something they saw on Twitter.

Grow your Twitter following

The key to driving awareness and engagement success on Twitter is to build your following. While there are a variety of techniques you can use, here are four key ways to get followers:

1. **Create engaging tweets:** Because Twitter is so fast-paced, it's important that you post regularly. Without regular posts, your tweets will quickly get pushed down your followers' streams. Think about creating a mix of content that ranges from entertaining to educational to promotional.

A good rule of thumb to use when creating your content mix is the 4-1-1 rule.

The 4-1-1 rule

Originally introduced by Joe Pulizzi of Content Marketing Institute, the 4-1-1 rule states that for every four early-stage, light, and informative pieces of content you share, you can have one soft-sell, promotional offer and one hard-sell offer, like a demo. The 4-1-1 rule can guide your sharing strategy for many social platforms, not just Twitter.

2. **Use Twitter lists:** Twitter lists are a simple way to accomplish two important things: strategically listening to your users and curating content for them. Curated content often comes in the form of a retweet and is a good way to ensure that your content mix is not purely self-promotional. To make curating content easier, create a Twitter list. Lists are a way to segment a group of accounts that regularly feature interesting content. Segmenting these accounts into a list makes finding content to retweet quicker and easier. It's important to note that some lists are private and some are public. You might want to make a private list of influencers for your brand to follow and retweet and a public list of brand partners or thought leaders within your industry.

3. **Craft your tweets:** There are a few important tips for making your tweets more searchable, shareable, and readable.
 - **Keep your tweets concise:** Hitting the maximum character count of 280 happens, but try to keep your tweet to around 100 characters. URL shorteners like Bitly and built-in tools on social media management platforms can help.
 - **Use #hashtags:** These symbols have become synonymous with Twitter and are used to tag tweets by topic so it's easier for users to find your tweet. Marketers can develop hashtags and use them to help promote and track social campaigns.
 - **Use @mentions:** Mentions are a way for you to engage with other Twitter users. Mentioning people will call their attention to your tweet, but avoid using mentions excessively because it can seem spammy.
4. **Host Twitter chats:** A Twitter chat is a public conversation based around a unique hashtag. The hashtag allows people to follow the discussion and easily participate. Most Twitter chats are recurring and focus on specific topics, but some are centered on special events. Hosting a Twitter chat is a way to engage with your audience and followers in real time.

TIPS

Twitter paid advertising

Because of its large global user base, Twitter can offer advertising options that are highly customizable and targeted. Users can interact with your promoted content, such as tweets, accounts, and trends, the same way they can with organic content. Twitter also offers website cards that promote a call-to-action and aim to drive more website visits. For more information on digital ads, check out our *Definitive Guide to Digital Advertising*.

- Create a Twitter list for your employees, competitors, influencers, and top followers.
- Keep your tweets short and sweet. Research from Buddy Media shows that tweets containing less than 100 characters receive 17 percent higher engagement than longer ones.
- Generate hashtags for events, product announcements, and other campaigns that need a big promotional push, and understand the popular hashtags that apply to your business, product, or service. According to research from Buddy Media, tweets with hashtags receive twice as much engagement than those without. But use them sparingly, since tweets with more than two hashtags showed a 17 percent drop in engagement.
- Engage regularly with industry leaders by interacting with their posts and sharing them with your network.
- Include relevant links. Tweets with links are 86 percent more likely to be retweeted, according to research.
- Twitter handles and media attachments don't count toward your word count anymore, but still use this extra space cautiously. You don't want to overwhelm users with too much text.
- Add stickers to your tweets to make them more fun and engaging. Stickers are searchable and function as a visual hashtag.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network, with more than 706 million members. It has expanded its solution beyond hiring and networking to include robust company pages, a highly targeted advertising solution, and publishing functionality. With these additions, LinkedIn is now the way to reach an audience with a business mindset.

Build your brand presence

You can build a profile on LinkedIn to showcase products, employee networks, blog posts, upcoming events, and status updates. Much like Twitter or Facebook, users on LinkedIn can follow your profile to learn more about your company. You can also post job openings on LinkedIn and search for candidates, making it a great venue for recruiting talent.

When you encourage your employees to participate on LinkedIn, it becomes a great professional location for them to promote both your brand and their personal brands. You can then leverage your employees' business networks by asking them to share your company posts and join and participate in relevant groups. The more evangelists you have on LinkedIn, the more opportunity you have to become a thought leader.

A strong LinkedIn presence comes from leveraging different aspects of the social network:

LinkedIn paid advertising

LinkedIn's paid promotions include sponsored updates and LinkedIn ads, which amplify your status updates and advertisements to your target audience. And with sponsored InMail, you can send messages directly to a user's LinkedIn inbox. For more information on digital ads, check out our *Definitive Guide to Digital Advertising*.

1. **Profile page:** Company profile pages are a free LinkedIn service for any user. Because this is your primary branded landing page on LinkedIn, it's important to make sure you have thought about the images and messages you choose to represent your brand.
2. **Content sharing:** Posting on your company page is a key way to build followers and fuel your paid advertising efforts. These posts can be text, images, links, video, or slide decks. It's important to note that because LinkedIn is perceived as a professional network, your content mix and tone should aim to be fairly professional and engaging. We've found that because users are on LinkedIn mostly for professional purposes, educational posts perform well.
3. **Showcase page:** A company showcase page is an extension of your company page that is designed to highlight specific products or services. Showcase pages are especially helpful when your business has multiple solutions with their own different fans and followers.
4. **Groups:** LinkedIn groups are communities formed around topics of interest, industry, title, professional organization, brand, and so on. In these spaces, users can share articles, post jobs, exchange advice, and gather digitally. Groups can be a strategic and important way for you to create a community of users, show thought leadership around a specific area, and gain insight into the pain points of potential customers.

Before starting a group, identify your objectives and decide which group structure will best facilitate those goals.

LinkedIn groups make it easy for you to locate potential customers. Simply make a list of keywords that relate to your prospects or the industries you target, then run a search for any LinkedIn groups related to these keywords. Once you find the right groups, participate in discussions, ask questions, and make connections.

LinkedIn for talent, recruiting, and careers

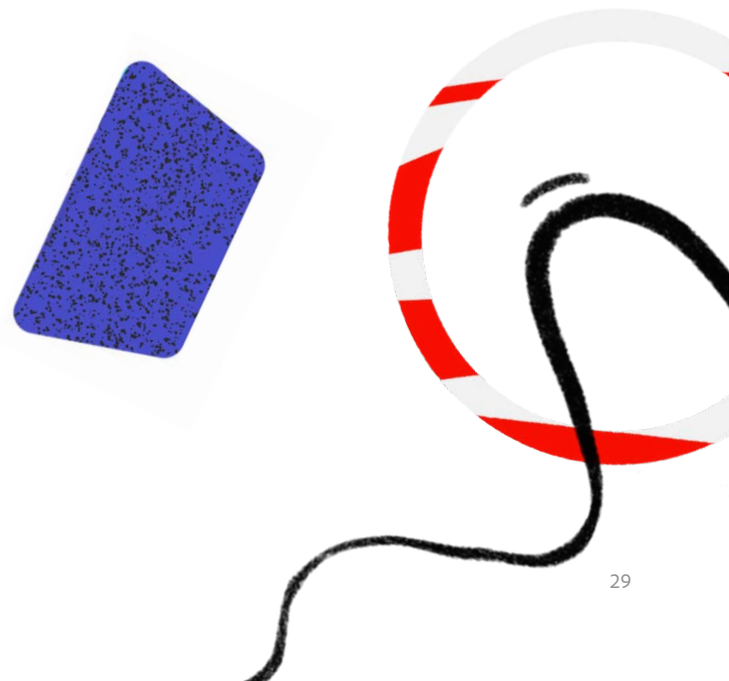
LinkedIn Talent Solutions is designed for recruiters and HR. The focal point of this offering is the company career page—a paid page that is tabbed behind your company profile page.

This space augments your company page branding efforts by sharing the personality and brand of your corporate culture. The marketing and messaging on your career page are targeted specifically at prospective employees or followers who are looking at all aspects of your company.

TIPS

Encourage employees to participate in LinkedIn groups to build their network and generate awareness around your brand.

- Create a group for your customers and brand advocates or an industry group for professionals in the same space.
- Optimize your LinkedIn page for SEO—include your top keywords in your company description and specialties to see a real impact in search results.
- Keep track of industry news and engage with key influencers.



Pinterest

Pinterest is a virtual scrapbook or pinboard that allows users to share and organize visual imagery and link to external sites. The platform functions like a visual search engine. Users can pin anything from around the web, other users can re-pin their images, and then they can organize their Pinterest “pins” by categorizing content on boards.

Pinterest can serve different purposes depending on the type of business you’re promoting. For B2B organizations, it’s a great way to curate visual content like infographics, videos, company culture, and even blog posts. The boards provide a unique, visually appealing way of organizing content. But always make sure your content is relevant to your audience and that you include a good content mix on your Pinterest boards.

For consumer organizations, Pinterest is a valuable tool that allows brands to curate content that builds and reinforces their look and feel. Depending on the product, Pinterest can help drive conversions and sales. From retail to fitness to DIY and beyond, Pinterest has become a valuable conversion generator for many marketers.

Retailers can easily market their goods on Pinterest, but B2B businesses (or any business without a strong visual aesthetic) typically don’t have Pinterest in their marketing plans. However, if your brand is highly invested in any of the following, you should consider using Pinterest:

- **Awareness:** Pinterest’s platform is a search engine in itself, allowing buyers to search for content they’re interested in—which could very well be your brand’s.
- **Engagement:** If you have interesting content that has done well on other social channels, you can also pin it. Pinterest allows you to appeal to a more visually focused segment that may not be spending their time on Facebook or Twitter. Pins can be a great way for your audience to collect a library of useful assets.
- **Branding:** Pinterest is all about the visuals. If you’re a design-forward company, leverage the fact that graphic designers are one of the most prolific groups of pinners. Get your creative team to pin their work to both inspire and be inspired. Start a company board to show your

peers the beauty of your marketing, and then start a board with pins of other brands’ marketing campaigns that inspire you.

- **Conversions:** Pins can link to pages on other websites, which gives you the opportunity to drive buyers to a landing page for a gated asset, a registration page, or a product page. Pinterest’s search is primarily how people find you and your pins, and it’s all about keywords.

Pinterest paid advertising

Using promoted pins, you can reach more people and ultimately drive more traffic not only to your boards, but also to your website. You can target buyers based on keywords, interests, location, language, device, or gender. And with a “Buy it” button, consumers can purchase products directly from the Pinterest iOS or Android app.

TIPS

- Use relevant keywords to describe your pins so users can easily find them.
- Re-pin what inspires you. Over 80 percent of pins are re-pins, according to RMetrics—so engage with other pins to increase your visibility.
- If you’re a consumer marketer, consider adding prices to your pins. Pins with prices get 36 percent more likes than those without, according to a study by Shopify.
- Organize your boards around different themes—product collections, company culture, inspiration, how-to, and more. To get started, document all the different types of assets you can share on Pinterest, then group them into common categories. Some of your categories may be broad (for example, “Office Fun”), while others will be specific (for example, “Infographics, Q4 2020”).

- Get verified as an official business on Pinterest so users view you as a trustworthy source of information. This will make your pins stand out as users are scanning, which is especially important if you're directing them to another website.

Instagram

Instagram is the go-to platform for sharing personal and branded visual content. With an active user base of over 1 billion, there is plenty of opportunity to turn users into fans or advocates of your brand. Many consumer brands have tremendous success with Instagram once they learn how best to engage their audience, whether it's through posts, stories, contests, giveaways, or other creative uses of the platform.

B2B organizations can use Instagram to share interesting quotes and fun visuals, capture event and office culture photos, run contests, or engage your customers in interactive activities. Whether you're a B2B organization or a consumer brand, here are a few tips to help you find success on Instagram:

Plan

Before you begin sharing photos and engaging users, create a plan for how you will reach your audience. Ask questions like:

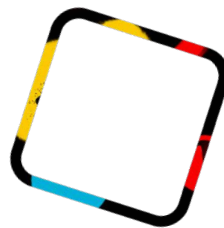
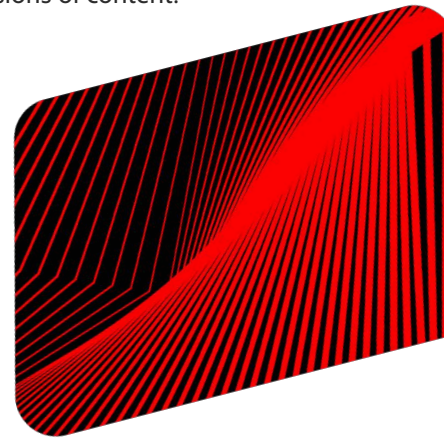
- What does my target audience want to see?
- How can I get them to engage with my photos and videos?
- What will get them talking about my company?

In the planning stage, start by determining what will make buyers engage positively with your brand before creating a strategy to make it happen.

Capture

Create and share your content. Consider the following objectives as you do:

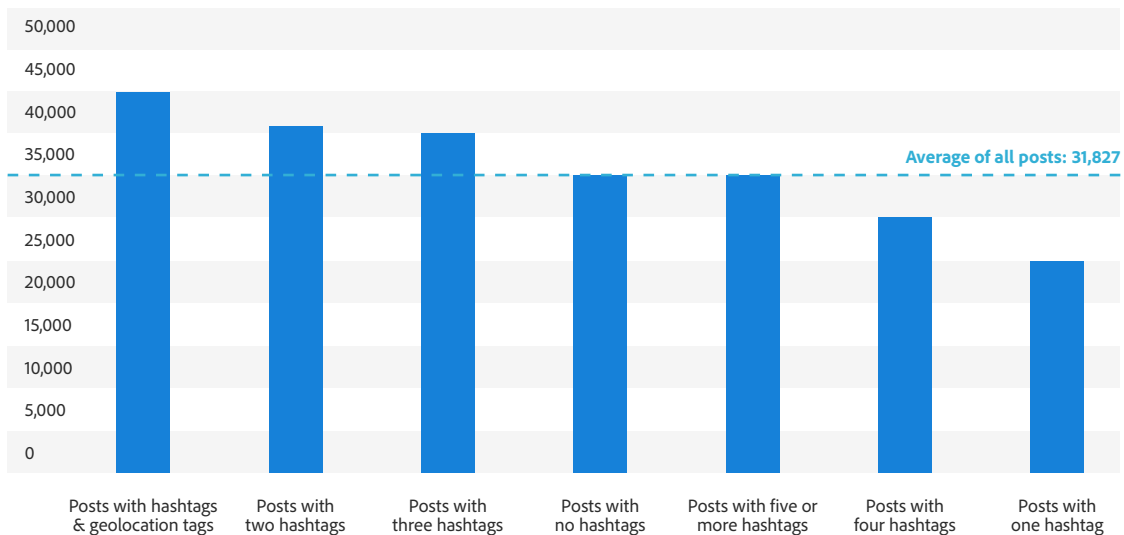
- **Make it exclusive.** Post images and videos that can only be seen on Instagram.
- **Make it visually engaging.** Instagram users are exposed to tons of high-gloss, visually appealing images every day. Don't post a photo or video unless it has aesthetic appeal.
- **Make it personal.** Post photos and videos that give your audience insight into the inner workings of your product or company.
- **Include your audience.** Find ways to feature your followers and promote them (with their permission). Including and acknowledging your audience will encourage them to continue to engage and share.
- **Use Instagram stories.** This lets you add polls, ask questions, run "ask me anythings" (AMAs), and more to test less-permanent versions of content.



Hashtag. The Instagram hashtag is a powerful feature that can help new users engage with your content. Hashtags act as keywords, providing a way for people to find photos through a simple search. They are especially useful as you begin to establish your brand as an industry leader and get more followers.

Use hashtags that are unique to your brand and industry, as well as ones that are popular

Hashtags and average engagement per post



keywords. And remember to use multiple hashtags on all your posts.

Engage. Engaging and sharing with potential customers is the primary reason to use Instagram. There are several ways for brands to do this:

- **Events.** Post photos and videos of events you host for your current and potential customers.
- **Geolocation.** Use the geolocation feature so users can easily discover your account and your photos. This can be especially useful when you're hosting a conference or event, or when you're promoting in-store events.
- **Gamification.** Hold a contest for your audience. Have viewers submit photos, provide captions, solve a puzzle, or any other activity where they are invited to participate.
- **Convert.** Instagram offers advertising that can drive direct sales, form fill-outs, subscriptions, and other conversion activities. While these are not organic posts, they are important to consider as you create your Instagram content mix.

Instagram paid advertising

On Instagram, you can advertise through a variety of imagery. With single photo ads and multiple photo carousel ads, you can use content that appears seamlessly in the user's feed. For more information on digital ads, check out our *Definitive Guide to Digital Advertising*.

TIPS

- Make sure your Instagram account name is very similar to your company's name and that it's set to public so users can easily find you through search, hashtags, and their networks' activity.
- Post at peak times. Between 7:00 and 9:00 p.m. are typically the busiest hours for Instagram.
- Identify hashtags that fit for your business and product, trending hashtags you want to participate in (like #MondayMotivation or #WednesdayWisdom), and hashtags unique to your brand. Then incorporate them in every single post. Consider using a branded hashtag as well. Simply Measured reports that 70 percent of the most-used hashtags are branded.
- Create an image with text on it, such as a quote or important takeaway, if you want to share text.
- Use Instagram stories to post more frequently without overwhelming your audience. This feature makes your content available for 24 hours, and you can choose which ones you want to save to your regular feed for a longer shelf life.

YouTube

YouTube has 2 billion monthly users. Your video titles should be customer-centric and descriptive so users can easily find your content, and your video descriptions should be two or three sentences that include targeted keywords.

Be sure to take advantage of the tagging feature, which is how YouTube determines the relevance of your asset and groups similar videos together. Five to seven tags are optimal to ensure your video appears as a "related video," which can help expand your audience.

TIPS

- Use a keyword-rich description. Google treats the description field as metadata and will help surface your video for searches if there's a keyword match.
- Post new videos consistently so users feel that it's worthwhile to subscribe to your channel. Set a cadence for how often you will publish videos and stick to it. Once you've set expectations with your audience, it can hurt your brand to not meet them.
- Include calls to action in your videos, asking viewers to subscribe or visit a link. You can direct them to your website to learn more or to a landing page to download a coupon or register for an event.
- Broadcast live videos on your YouTube channel (and then post the recording).

YouTube paid advertising

Whether your buyers are looking at funny cat videos or watching educational marketing videos, there are various types of ads you can show to targeted audiences based on content. These include in-stream, in-search, in-display, or in-video overlay ads. For more information on digital ads, check out our *Definitive Guide to Digital Advertising*.

Snapchat

While Snapchat is primarily a messaging app for one-to-one or group conversations, brands can still use the platform to tell interactive stories. Snapchat content disappears after 24 hours, but can be downloaded and saved elsewhere.

TIPS

- Create a custom QR code for your brand's profile and get creative with where you place it.
- Create branded geofilters for events and launches for your audience to use and share with friends.
- Understand how your tone, voice, and branding will be represented. Consider starting an employee ambassador program to share unique views of different teams within your company.
- Think in terms of narrative. The "My Story" feature accumulates your snaps over a 24-hour period. Think about the entire story you want to tell your customers about over that period of time.

Presentation sharing

Snapchat paid advertising

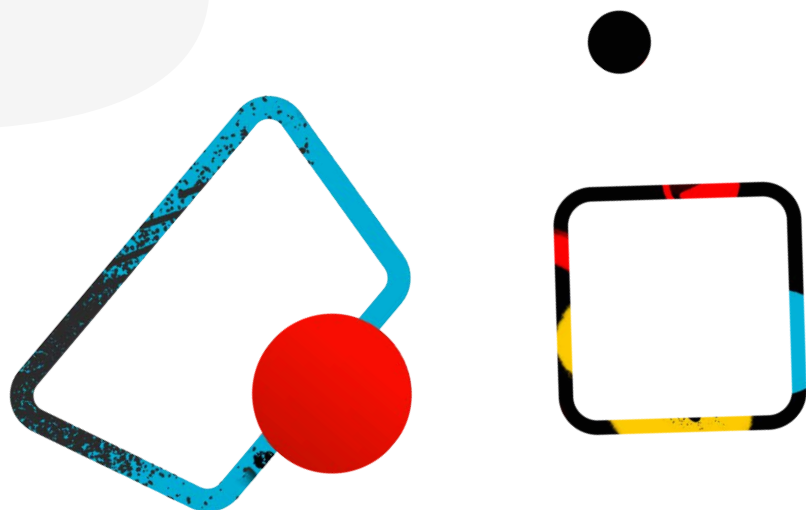
Snapchat's 3V (vertical video views) ads, which appear in both premium and curated content, allow brands to promote their stories in portrait mode, which takes up the full-screen space. And with the geofilter feature, businesses can create unique filters for their audiences to use to promote a campaign.

Presentation-sharing platforms play a critical role in the research your buyers do long before they get in touch with you. Platforms such as SlideShare and Scribd offer a great way to display your content, educate your audience, and support your SEO strategy.

Upload and share content that addresses your buyer personas, and track which sites are most popular with each. Then refine which topics and content work best on different sites. Types of content you may want to share include infographics, slide decks, and webinar slides.

TIPS

- **Make it a part of something bigger.** Your presentation is more powerful if it's part of a larger content initiative. If your presentation is part of a bigger campaign, you can engage your audience further with content you know will interest them.
- **Choose presentation topics where you have expertise.** Leverage subject matter experts within your company for topics they know well. This will help you provide value by offering your audience a unique, expert point of view on a topic.
- **Take it on the road.** Use your presentation outside of simply posting it to the presentation-sharing platform. Share it at company meetings, user groups, meetups, and conferences.
- **Get SEO value.** Make sure all your presentations are optimized for SEO so you can reap the search engine rewards. This will help drive traffic not only to your presentation and channel, but also back to your website.



Q&A sites

Q&A sites give users a platform to ask questions, provide answers, and discuss topics of interest. The best sites provide easily searchable answers and can be good for SEO. Popular Q&A sites include Quora, Reddit, and Answers.com, although topics on these sites can vary significantly.

Sites like these can help you drive traffic to your website and can also help you build relationships with key influencers. Set up Google Alerts for your company, competitors, and top keywords—and keep an eye out for questions you can answer. Try to provide thought leadership and insight in your comments, and only include link-backs when relevant. Most importantly, always focus on building relationships.

TIPS

- Listen for conversations that are going on about your company or product, and ask employees to join in when appropriate. For example, if customers are experiencing a technical issue or looking for advice about your product or service, you can alert your colleagues and ask them to answer the questions.
- Host an Ask Me Anything (AMA) with subject matter experts and thought leaders within your company. AMAs give your brand direct access to your buyer's needs and interests and allow them to connect with you on a more personal level.

Many Q&A sites have high rankings and a continuous amount of traffic. Adding links to your responses on Q&A sites is a great way to drive traffic to your website and make a positive impact on your SEO. However, make sure that you aren't just placing links without a quality response—links should be relevant to the question and your answer.





4. Understanding social media advertising

Putting your ad spend where your audience is

Paid social media advertising, like organic social media marketing, is becoming an integral part of many marketing plans. The reason is simple—leading social networks have large, high-quality audiences. In this section, we'll examine how to think about your paid advertising campaigns across social media platforms.

Social media advertising allows you to target specific audiences and deliver your message on the platforms where you track all your paid social campaigns so you can gain insights into what's working and what's not. Advertising on social media platforms has changed tremendously over the years—and for the better. Recent updates to the algorithms on many social networks give users a better experience—one with content that's more relevant and less promotional. That's why it's important to supplement your organic posts with paid advertising that helps your audience see your content.

This has led to an explosion in digital advertising on social media platforms. As marketers increasingly spend more on social, it's more important than ever to have the right strategy and understand the return on ad spend (ROAS) from your campaigns.

According to a 2020 Statistica report, Facebook remains by far the most favored social media platform for paid social media advertising. Instagram is a distant second, followed by LinkedIn.

Social media advertising tips:

1. Focus on valuable content and solid offers.
2. Use platform targeting for the biggest impact.
3. Always add value.
4. Test your ads and content on each platform.
5. Make your tone match the platform.

Defining your social media advertising

Before you jump into social media advertising, let's first look at how to structure your paid social media campaigns—from identifying the best platforms to measuring their effectiveness.

Start by defining your goals.

It's important to understand your goals for each paid social campaign up front because they'll determine your strategy and key performance metrics. Your objective—whether it's brand awareness, engagement, lead generation, customer acquisition, retention, advocacy, or a combination thereof—will help you map out the most relevant offers and content.

Then identify your audience.

Just as you would with any marketing campaign, you need to know who you're trying to reach with each of your paid social ads. Use the personas you developed to identify the prospects you should be targeting, then pinpoint your exact audience for your social campaigns. There are many ways to target specific audiences across social platforms, but if you don't know exactly who they are, you won't be able to form a meaningful connection with them.

Pick the right social media platform and content.

Audiences on each platform are different, and while some overlap across channels, their expectations of content for each channel differ. You not only need to understand the platforms where your audience is and how to reach them, but you also need to know what content will engage them on each. Try testing different types of content across your social media to see what resonates and where.

“ Social media is speeding toward a 'pay if you want to play' model. With the introduction of algorithms across most major social networks, it's very hard for businesses to stand out without bringing money to the table.

Michael Stelzner

Founder and CEO, Social Media Examiner

Select targeting options.

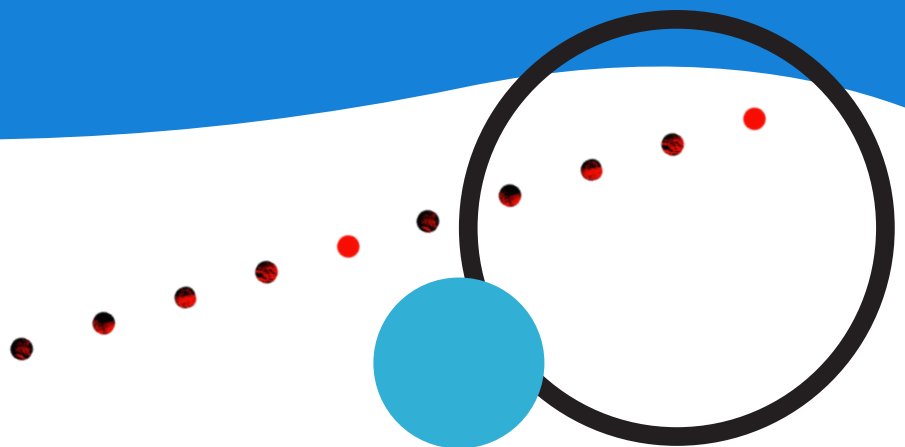
Once you've determined the platforms for your advertising, it's time to get familiar with the targeting options on each.

Social networks are getting more sophisticated with their targeting options, and you can now target based on different attributes like interests, skills, titles, and company names. You can even use lists from your marketing automation platform. LinkedIn lets you target people based on their title, skill set, company, and degree, while Facebook allows you to target people based on their demographics, behaviors, and interest levels in certain topics or products. You can also exclude certain audiences from specific content or ads.

Consider dark posts or direct sponsored content

Called "dark posts" by Facebook and "direct sponsored content" by LinkedIn, these are ads you can create and promote without publishing directly to your news feed. They allow to do the following:

- Promote a product or service to a specific audience.
- Adjust your ad messaging based on the segment you're targeting.
- Promote local events that will only apply to a regional audience.
- Avoid alienating followers by sharing too many broad messages on your timeline.
- A/B test different ads without having to post them multiple times.



Consider full lifecycle advertising with ad targeting

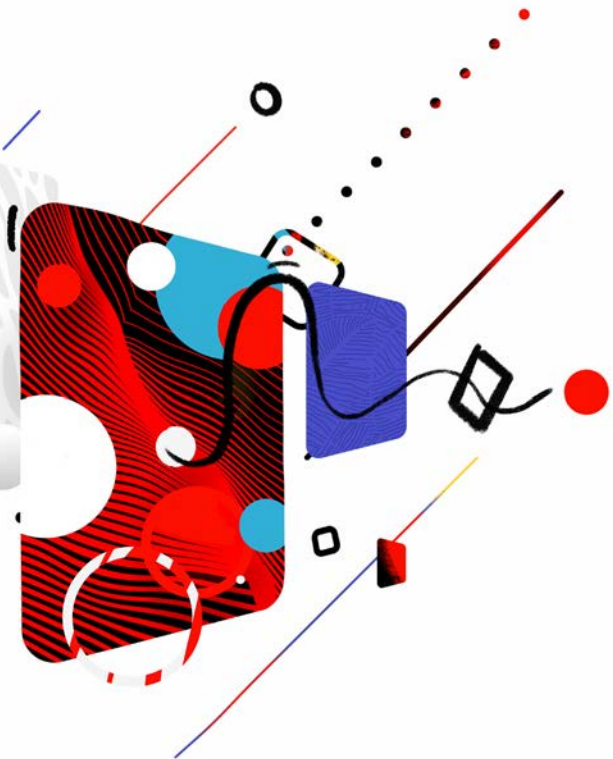
Ad targeting lets you associate offline conversions with the paid search ads that initiated them. So, rather than optimizing ads based on landing page conversions, you can focus your bids on keywords that generate the most qualified leads, sales opportunities, pipeline, or revenue. Using this information to optimize your pay-per-click campaigns will boost ROI, especially when part of the sales process takes place outside the website.

Solutions like Marketo Engage has unique audience data on high-value prospects and customers, such as an engagement or lead score, buyer journey stage, product or topic interests, products owned, cross-channel activity, and more. By connecting this data in with Facebook, LinkedIn, and other ad platforms, you can target the right potential customers with meaningful, relevant ads at each stage of the buyer journey.

Marketo Engage also lets you send lists of your best prospects or customers to social media platforms, which can identify similar people. And once you drive targeted prospects to your website and landing pages, you can retarget these anonymous visitors with personalized ads after they leave. You'll be able to identify details like industry, company size, revenue, company name, location, and other attributes, and connect them with the social media platform.

After a prospect provides their contact details and becomes known, you can continue to target them with ads on social media to accelerate the nurture process. For example, you could target qualified leads with a live online demo offer to bring them into the sales process.

You can even support the bottom of the funnel by targeting contacts at early-stage sales opportunities with messages that help position your organization and offerings.



Create and measure your campaigns

A good campaign structure will help you measure and report results. Building separate campaigns around each product and service you want to market helps you identify the audience most likely to respond. You can then serve them the most relevant content or ads.

This is much harder to accomplish if you have all your personas grouped together in the same campaign. However, in some cases, it might be wise to start with a broader audience, like when you're launching a new product. You can track the campaign data to identify which personas responded the most.

There are a few ways to track the performance of your social campaigns. Clicks and form fills are standard metrics, but if you're using a marketing automation platform, you can go beyond those and do more in-depth tracking.

Qualified leads, sales opportunities, pipeline generated, and revenue generated per channel or campaign are just a few examples of what you can track using a marketing automation platform. This gives you a better opportunity to optimize your campaigns and budgets to ultimately drive more ROI.

To do this, tag your URLs with unique query string parameters for each campaign. Depending on how granular you want to get, you can track your activity at a channel level, a campaign level, or across campaigns at a product or asset level. Take event registration, for example. By creating unique query strings for your registration URLs, you can track which campaigns drove the most registrations and attendance for the event. And afterward, you can measure how much each campaign contributed to pipeline. This will help you understand what's really working to drive your business.

TIPS

As you create and measure your paid ad campaigns, A/B test different versions using dark posts to select audiences. Analyze your results to understand which version drove the most conversions, such as clicks or form fills. Then track which posts drove conversions that ultimately matured into opportunities and eventually customers—all without disrupting your hard-won followers.

Ad network specifications for design

Whether you want to place your ad on social media or another ad network, you need to be familiar with the specs.

Google

Medium rectangle	160 x 600 pixels
Half page	320 x 50 pixels
Large mobile banner	250 x 250 pixels
Large rectangle	468 x 60 pixels
Leaderboard	970 x 90 pixels

Instagram

Landscape image ad

- Landscape image ad size: 1200 x 628 pixels
- Minimum resolution: 600 x 315 pixels
- Proper aspect ratio: 1.9:1

Square image ad

- Recommended square image ad size: 1080 x 1080 pixels
- Minimum square image ad resolution: 600 x 600 pixels
- Proper aspect ratio: 1:1

Vertical image ad

- Recommended square image ad size: 1080 x 1350 pixels
- Minimum vertical image ad size: 600 x 750 pixels
- Proper aspect ratio: 4:5

Twitter

Website card: 800 x 418 (1.91:1 aspect ratio) or 800 x 800 (1:1 aspect ratio)

Single image tweet: 600 x 335

LinkedIn

Carousel specs: 1080 x 1080 pixels with a 1:1 aspect ratio

Facebook

Carousels

Carousel cards: 1080 x 1080

Single-image ads: 1200 x 628 pixels

- 20% text rule: no more than 20% of the image can be text

Slideshow ads: 1280 x 720 pixels

Canvas ads: (mobile only) 1200 x 628 pixels

Facebook video

Format: .MOV or .MP4

Aspect ratio: 16:9

Resolution: 720 ppi at minimum

Thumbnail image: 1200 x 675 pixels, 16.9 ratio



5. Developing a social media calendar

Setting your cadence

Companies tend to have one of two problems with social—either they can't think of anything to post, or they've got so much material that they overwhelm their audience. Regardless of your situation, the question of what—and how often—to post on social is a very important one.

To figure out the right mix for your business, you should start by looking at your priorities and determining what you hope to accomplish with your social presence.

You probably have several objectives, which could include the following:

- Sharing relevant content
- Showing off your brand's personality and culture
- Promoting events
- Establishing thought leadership
- Staying on top of industry trends
- Announcing new products
- Gathering new names for your marketing database
- Acquiring new customers
- Building and nurturing relationships with your buyers
- Increasing traffic to your blog, website, or landing pages

“ The process of editorial strategy starts with identifying the right cadence of publishing. The goal should always be to maximize engagement with quality updates without overwhelming the stream of each channel.

Michael Brenner

CEO, Marketing Insider Group

Create an editorial calendar based on your priorities. Use this to inform the topics and stage that you're targeting on each social media platform.

Fill out the top priorities for your editorial calendar here:

Priority 1: _____

Priority 2: _____

Priority 3: _____

Priority 4: _____

Priority 5: _____

Social request form

A social promotion request form gives the social team a big-picture view of upcoming posts and ensures that important promotions are properly scheduled.

Social Promotion Request Form

Here's what our form looks like. Feel free to tweak for your own company's needs:

1. What would you like us to promote?

(Please include any applicable links)

2. When do you want this promoted?

(Ex. "3 times in March," "1 week before the event," "1 day before the webinar")

3. If you'd like your post to go on Twitter, please write the exact message below:

(Make sure that the messaging is under 140 characters, link included. Don't forget to include Twitter handles or hashtags if applicable)

4. If you'd like your post to go on LinkedIn, please write the exact message below:

5. If you'd like your post to go on Facebook, please write the exact message below:

(Don't forget to include hashtags if applicable)

6. Anything else we need to know about?

(Please write any comments, details, or notes that we should be aware of)

Posting frequency on social networks

Each social network requires a content mix and posting frequency that matches the expectations of its audience.

Facebook

It's very likely that your audience, or at least a segment of it, is on Facebook. Statista reports the platform has over 6 billion monthly active users. We recommend posting to your Facebook page no more than twice per day.

We also recommend keeping your business Facebook page open all day. If your audience is engaging with you via comments, likes, shares, and messages, it's important that you join the conversations. And if someone has a question or complaint, you want to be available to address it immediately. (Also, if someone posts inappropriate or offensive content to your page, you should delete it quickly.)

Twitter

Unlike Facebook, you can post to Twitter many times a day without overwhelming your audience. In fact, we recommend posting roughly once per hour. You can start at once per day and build from there. Posting frequently is the only way you can stay top of mind since your tweets get pushed down users' feeds quickly by other activity from their networks. That's why we highly suggest using a social media management platform that allows you to schedule tweets ahead of time.

But just because you should tweet frequently, that doesn't mean you should always be self-promotional. Keep the 4-1-1 rule firmly in mind.

Also, take advantage of the variety of ways you can engage your audience on Twitter. You'll want to be favoriting, retweeting, and responding to tweets from your audience on a regular basis.

LinkedIn

Because LinkedIn is a professional networking site, it's typically used to share articles and blog posts, new educational content, and upcoming events. Unlike Twitter, which is highly interactive and therefore time-consuming to maintain, or Facebook, which is best for fun and entertaining content, LinkedIn is the most serious, straight-to-the-point social network. It's also a powerful recruiting tool. You can post job openings on LinkedIn—it's probably one of the first things potential employees check out. A good practice is to post to your LinkedIn page one or two times per day.

Instagram, Snapchat, and Pinterest

For the social media platforms that rely heavily on images, it's okay to post more often. Test what cadence works best for your audience and your brand. You can experiment with between three and seven posts per day for Instagram and Snapchat stories, and once per day for regular Instagram posts.

“ Learn the language, guidelines, and etiquette for all the social platforms that you want to be a part of. Being nice is always in style.

Peg Fitzpatrick

Social Media Strategist and Co-author, *The Art of Social Media: Power Tips for Power Users*

“ Spend 90% of your time and effort helping your audience. When you share other people's great content most of the time, your own great content some of the time, and sprinkle in some 'helpful' promotions, your audience will reward the kindness.

Michael Brenner

CEO, Marketing Insider

Social network posting frequency worksheet

Fill in the following information to build your own calendar for each social network. You can use this page for every network you're a part of.

Who is responsible for posting and monitoring the brand page?

How many times per day will you post for each social media platform?

Social Media Platform:

- Times per day
- Monday through Friday
- 7 days a week
- Other

Social Media Platform:

- Times per day
- Monday through Friday
- 7 days a week
- Other

Social Media Platform:

- Times per day
- Monday through Friday
- 7 days a week
- Other

What upcoming releases, company/industry events, announcements, and content do you want to share?
(You may have to check with your teams—PR, content, product.)

List any holidays, national/international events, and trends that you want to post about:

Depending on your answers to the previous questionnaires for your different platforms, your content calendar might look very full. For example, this chart shows a week's worth of posts from Adobe across four of our social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram):

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Instagram	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Twitter	✓✓✓✓ ✓	✓✓✓✓ ✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓ ✓✓	✓✓✓✓ ✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓ ✓	✓✓✓✓ ✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓ ✓✓
Facebook	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓
LinkedIn	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓

Using our social editorial calendar, we look at the posts for each day and week as a whole. This lets us see if we're over-posting about a certain topic or failing to support one of our core competencies.

Paid promotion

Depending on the size of your team, the person managing your social media marketing may not be the same person running your social paid advertising. It's important to develop and define a process between these people and teams to ensure there is a consistent flow of both organic posts and social paid advertising.



Social media daily checklist

A checklist is helpful when you're trying to make sure to dot all your i's and cross your t's. It will help ensure you're on track to meet your goals and set your cadence correctly.

Social marketing has a lot of moving parts. Print out or copy this checklist to make sure you're completing the necessary daily tasks:

- Check any incoming tweets/Facebook comments/LinkedIn mentions from yesterday.
 - Refer any support questions to the appropriate team
 - Reply to any comments
 - Like, favorite, or retweet where appropriate
- Check for friend requests and new followers; accept and follow back where appropriate.
- Double check the tweets/posts you scheduled last night.
 - Check for relevance (situations can change overnight!)
 - Check all links
 - Check for typos
- Check for new social promotion requests from your team, whether this is done via a dynamic form or an email alias.
- Check your paid promotions.
 - Are you still within your budget?
 - Is your audience engaging?
- Check your editorial calendar and colleagues to confirm any events, industry news, or announcements you'll need to monitor.
- Send tomorrow's tweets, Facebook posts/LinkedIn posts around for review.
 - Check all links
 - Check for typos
 - Check your tracking parameters (If using marketing automation or tracking platform to collect data)



6. Structuring your social media team

Team structure

How you structure your social media team and communicate its role and responsibilities to the rest of your organization has a direct impact on your ongoing success. Let's take a look at a few things to consider as you get started.

Creating a social media governance board

In addition to your focused social media staff, you will want to create a social media governance board made up of executives, stakeholders, subject matter experts, and key employee advocates. This is the team that determines your ongoing strategy goals and internal training initiatives, makes key decisions around your social media interactions, and serves as a chain of command for emergency situations. Your governance board should meet occasionally to reassess and innovate on processes and strategies.

When social media gets tricky

Social media offers a very immediate and personal connection with your audience, but it's important to remember that everything is public. While you can do everything in your power to make sure your audience and customers are happy on social media, at some point you may run into a situation that needs a more immediate response—like an unhappy customer. For those cases, it's vital that you have a social media escalation policy that indicates who should respond and how.



I encourage all brands to respond to all brand mentions in social media. If someone is taking time out of their day to mention your brand—either positively or negatively—it means that to some extent, they care. And therein lies an opportunity.

Dan Gingiss

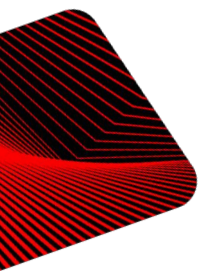
Co-Host, *Focus on Customer Service* podcast

Staffing considerations

Social media marketing takes effort, especially if you want to create an integrated cross-channel campaign strategy. So, you will want to carefully consider resource allocation. How many resources you'll need to dedicate to social media marketing will depend on the following:

- Budget for new head count
- Strategic goals
- Number of platforms utilized
- Weekly social time commitments
- Content strategy
- Current and future community size

The size of your team and the scope of responsibilities will vary considerably based on your organization's size and structure. In a large, global organization, social media responsibilities may sit across many teams and paid advertising may be a separate team.



Consumer organizations that have a lean team might decide to outsource paid social advertising. Start-up social teams, on the other hand, could be responsible for other areas of the business as well. With that in mind, here are some considerations for your business:

- Start by dedicating one full-time person for social media marketing management. This person will spend their time mostly on community management, social messaging, content creation, best practices, and planning.
- Hire a full-time employee dedicated to creating and managing all content.
- Add a member to your digital advertising team who is dedicated to driving effectiveness and hitting your goals with paid social advertising.

However you choose to structure your team, it's important that you cover the following responsibilities:

- Plan social campaigns
- Segment your social customer relationship management (CRM)
- Score and nurture leads on social
- Run social analytics
- Map to higher-level company goals
- Define social media marketing objectives
- Optimize social channels
- Create a content strategy

According to an Adobe online survey, 50 percent of companies named content marketing as a top skill critical to their success.

Social media is a company-wide effort

While your social media team will do the heavy lifting, strong employee advocates on each channel will help strengthen your brand presence. You may encounter comments or questions that can best be addressed by your own employees, so it's a good idea to have a social representative from each team—sales, product marketing, support, customer success, and so on—who can engage in these conversations. These individuals will represent your company and bring their unique expertise and experiences to the table.

“

If you're looking for talent to run your social media marketing, look for people who are natural communicators and can carry on a conversation.

Matt Heinz

President, Heinz Marketing

“

Marketing today is getting more and more specialized. I outsource paid media to a specialist agency who stays on top of trends and techniques. But for organic, where the real relationships form, I think it is unwise to send to an agency. We hold tightly and keep it in-house.

Mark W. Schaefer

Executive Director, Schaefer Marketing Solutions



7. Integrating social media into your omnichannel marketing strategy

Integrating social media

The best brands weave themselves into their customers' lives—becoming part of their identity and listening and responding to each customer's needs. They effectively practice omnichannel marketing, which provides a seamless customer experience, regardless of channel or device.

To be successful today, brands need to look beyond disconnected vendors, departments, and strategies to make a bigger impact and give customers a continuous experience.

This means you should use diverse channels and messages that reinforce and support each other. Your audience may subscribe to your emails and follow you on multiple social media platforms. So while your message should be consistent, you don't want to bombard them with the exact same content on every channel.

“ Social media programs cannot exist in a vacuum—you need social, sales, content, SEO, and even advertising working hand-in-hand—so mostly you need a solid marketing strategy.

John Jantsch

Speaker and Author of *Duct Tape Marketing*, *The Referral Engine*, and *The Commitment Engine*



Automating your cross-channel social media marketing

Your communications with buyers on each channel—your website, your Facebook page, your emails—should not repeat each other. Rather, they should inform each other and enable you to listen and respond appropriately. The Marketo Engage marketing automation platform gives you access to an Audience Hub with customer profiles based on demographic and behavioral data gathered across many channels. This helps you send the right messages to each channel, in coordination with the others.

Nurturing defined

Nurturing is the process of building effective relationships with potential customers throughout the buying journey and beyond, maximizing results and revenue for your organization. It requires listening and responding to buyers on multiple channels. You can now nurture anonymous visitors much earlier on in your buyers' journey, creating a more personalized, engaging, and guided experience.

Nurture

Today's buyers move seamlessly and quickly across channels. A typical customer moves from email to social media to your website and back to social media in the blink of an eye—so they need to see an integrated experience across every channel. Your marketing automation platform and nurturing campaigns must account for all the ways a buyer will interact and engage with your brand.

Make sure your social media platforms are key elements in your customer or lead nurturing strategy. When a potential customer mentions your company on social media or interacts in a different way, you can use your engagement marketing platform's automation software to listen and respond with triggered emails and communication. You can also use sophisticated targeting with paid social media ads.

An engagement marketing solution lets you target your audience efficiently by making marketing assets—emails, landing pages, forms, segmentations, and workflows—easy to replicate and implement. This fusion of planning and execution gives you more flexibility than ever, which helps you engage buyers quickly and personally to move them to the next stage in the customer lifecycle.

Drive social on other channels

To build your social presence, it's critical to make your profiles visible on your other channels, like your website, email, and beyond.

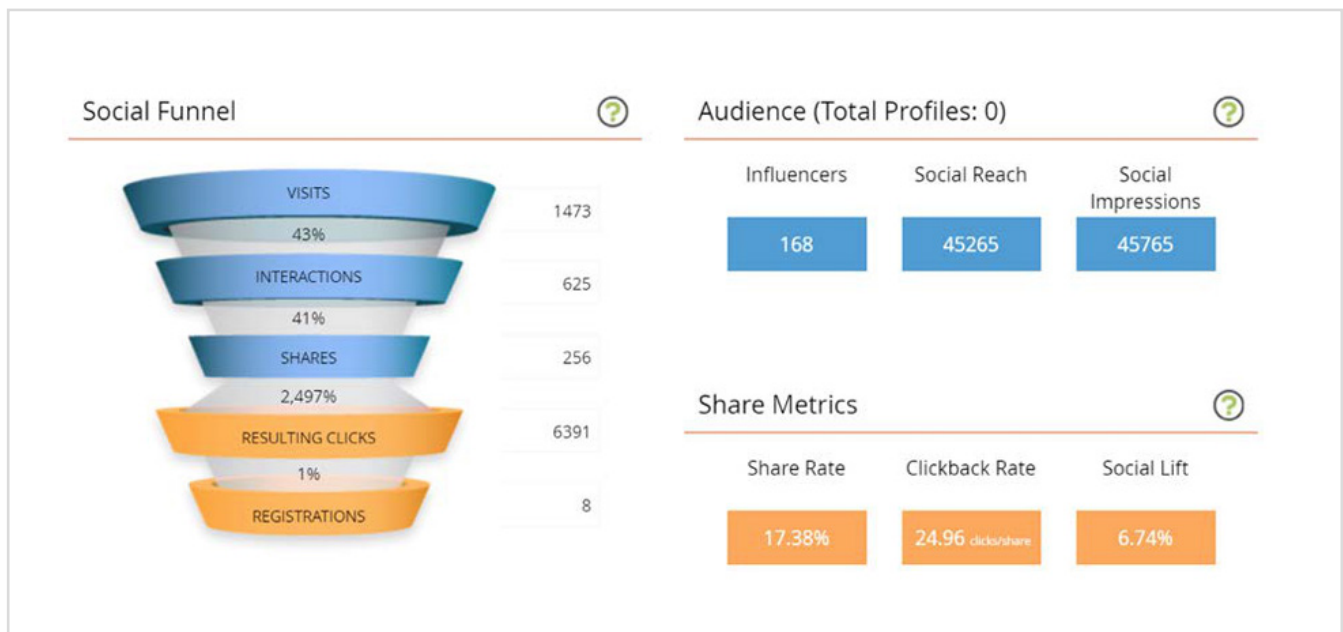
It's likely that most of your audience has a Facebook or Twitter account. Make it easy for your buyers to download an asset or register for an event by using their existing accounts to autofill forms. This will not only help ensure that you have an easy-to-use solution, but it will also capture rich data that can inform your future campaigns.

Web

As buyers browse your website and interact with your content, the data you collect on their behavior feeds into a master view that fuels your communication exchange across all channels. If your marketing automation solution has a web personalization app, you can leverage a visitor's lead or engagement score, or stage in the buyer journey, to personalize your site and your retargeting ads on social channels. For example, a potential customer may come to your website to sign up for a free trial. Later, you can use that information to retarget them on social media with an offer.

You can also leverage your landing pages to promote your social media presence. With Marketo Engage, you can set up a social referral campaign to combine the power of compelling offers for referrers with a reach that extends across major social media platforms. This is a great way to quickly grow your customer base. These referrals can be tracked by your marketing automation system, since each shared message includes a unique link that tracks the responses at every stage.

As seen below, the social dashboard in Marketo Engage tracks a social campaign's progression and effectiveness and reveals how prospects are helping to get the word out.



Mobile

Incorporating mobile marketing can inform your other marketing campaigns. You can do this by tracking mobile website visits, emails opened on mobile devices, app installs, in-app activities, and responses to push notifications and in-app messaging. It's also very important to be able to respond to customers on mobile. Say a customer opens your email and clicks on a form, but then exits the landing page without submitting it. If they have your app installed, you can send them a push notification informing them that their form was not processed.

Email

You can easily integrate your email campaigns and social media platforms in these ways:

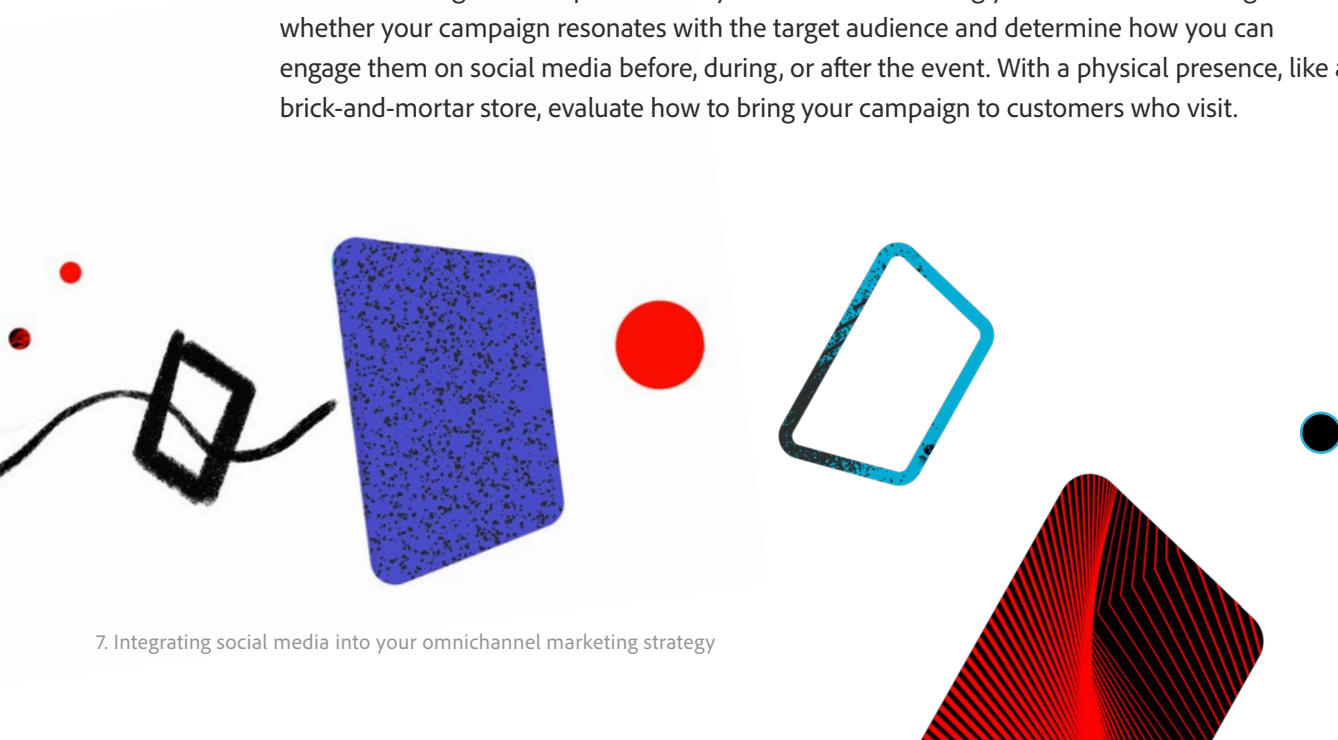
- **Social connecting:** Grow your following by including links to your social accounts in your emails.
- **Social sharing:** Extend the reach of your social messages with email.
- **Social promotion:** Promote your email marketing efforts with social.

You can supplement each email address in your database with the contact's social media data. Feature a Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn connect button in email opt-in confirmation messages. Add a Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn connect button to your preference center for recipients who'd rather stay in touch over social networks. Listen for keywords that your audience uses in social media, and then send segmented emails using those keywords.

Offline

Traditional channels often take a mass marketing approach and can sometimes be hard to measure. But they can be a powerful way to augment your social media marketing campaigns and are still a worthwhile piece of your marketing toolbox. It's important that they're in line with your campaign goals.

Event marketing can be a powerful way to stand out and bring your brand to life. Gauge whether your campaign resonates with the target audience and determine how you can engage them on social media before, during, or after the event. With a physical presence, like a brick-and-mortar store, evaluate how to bring your campaign to customers who visit.





8. Building your social media technology stack

How technology can improve your social media marketing processes and measurement

It's not enough to know how many shares you received on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram. You need to know who shared your content, what they shared, and with whom they shared it. Social applications offer more insight into all your social activities, so you know who your top followers are, what content they share, and what their networks look like.

By analyzing your social sharing metrics, you can test different campaigns, content, and social media platforms against each other so you can determine what is working and what isn't. When you use a marketing automation platform, you gain a single source of truth for cross-channel activities. This allows you to provide your prospects or customers with the right message at the right time and in the right place.

“ Technology can help social media marketers figure out what works and what does not.

Michael Stelzner

Founder and CEO, Social Media Examiner

Choosing a smart tech stack

As you continue to build out your social media operations, you'll need to consider what technology will help you get the most out of your time and budget. Here are a few key considerations that can help you make the best decisions for your company.

Build a solid foundation first

Many marketing automation solutions are great, but the key to choosing the right one is understanding what you're trying to accomplish. Not just in a specific channel, but as a marketing team, department, and organization as a whole. Building your tech stack is an important decision. So carefully evaluate how each new tool and its capabilities will sync with your current systems—especially your foundational systems of record, like your CRM. Document your data flow, rules, and data hygiene processes. Understand application programming interfaces (APIs) and what solutions are truly out-of-the box.

Understand where you are and where you're going

You need to know what the current state of your business is and where you plan to go. If you're like most businesses, you're trying to grow—so make sure you consider this as you evaluate new solutions. It's critical to think about tools that will grow with you. You should also understand your business needs versus wants.

Identify solutions to integrate into your tech stack

After you identify your core components and define your road map, evaluate new solutions that align with your strategy. You'll want to make sure these solutions can integrate with your core platforms. Social media management platforms like Hootsuite allow you to schedule and publish posts across different social media platforms and analyze your social campaigns. And through an integration with your marketing automation platform, you can gain context into your buyers' real-time interactions with your brand across all channels.



I've tested and optimized just about every social software that's been given to me because without the science side, you really don't know what's going on around you and where you should be concentrating.

Bryan Kramer
CEO, PureMatter

Avoid a Frankenstack

A "Frankenstack" is a set of disparate tools an organization tries to force into working together that ultimately results in a mess. It's often time-consuming and expensive to fix. The key to avoiding it is to have a plan, involve IT, and be honest about the resources you need to maintain and manage your solutions. This thoughtfulness will save you time and money in the future.



9. Measuring the ROI of your social media campaigns

Connect the dots to make your social media measurable

To demonstrate how social media marketing contributes to business growth, you need to connect the right data points. But that isn't always straightforward.

You need the right set of tools to accomplish this across all your channels. Without the right metrics, it's nearly impossible to know how to optimize future campaigns to drive the best ROI for your business. More importantly, you won't be able to determine the ROI of your social channels in the first place. This makes it hard to build the case for more budget or head count.

As you plan your social media campaigns, it's important to determine how you will evaluate success. Just as you would with other marketing campaigns, you need to take specific steps to make your social media efforts measurable. The best marketing campaigns have deliberate measurement strategies planned in advance.

“ So much of social media used to be simply about monitoring brands and basic KPIs like network size, reach, and engagement. The role social media plays horizontally across the customer lifecycle requires far more comprehensive analytics. There are now far more opportunities for connecting the dots between social awareness, engagement, and conversion.

Lee Odden

CEO, Top Rank Marketing



Content creation is obviously a big deal, but perhaps even more important is analytics. We need to be able to dig into data and emerge with insights and truth.

Mark W. Shaefer

Executive Director, Schaefer Marketing Solutions

Early-stage metrics

Early-stage content is typically fun, entertaining, or educational, and works to build brand awareness and affinity. You should be measuring data that indicates whether your campaigns are accomplishing this.

Your social media platforms may have native analytics dashboards with soft metrics that help you evaluate and understand early indicators that are precursors to conversions. These could include brand awareness and recognition, influence, and mindshare. Followers, engagement, and reach/impression metrics are especially important for your organic posts, since your objectives there are to build brand awareness and amplify your voice.

Followers: Tracks the size of your audience on each channel over time to understand how many people are interested in your brand and your message.

Engagement: Pay close attention to the interactions social media users have with your social media accounts, such as clicks, likes, shares, and comments on your posts and time spent watching your videos.

Reach/Impressions: Measure the number of people who have seen your posts—it's an important indicator of brand awareness.

To demonstrate your total impact on the business, you need to measure hard metrics, like conversions, revenue, and ROI. There are two types of conversions you should track:

New names: Track the number of people your campaign brought into your database. This can help you measure how successful your social media campaigns are at acquiring new leads or how many purchases your campaigns generate.

Existing names: When your campaigns convert known names, your marketing automation platform measures how they converted, such as downloading a whitepaper, which adds to their lead score.

For your paid social media campaigns, you'll want to track the results of your spending.

Cost per lead/acquisition: B2B marketers typically track the cost per lead through their paid social campaigns, while consumer marketers may track the cost per acquisition. To calculate cost, divide the cost of your paid social campaign by the number of leads or acquisitions it brought in.

As you can see, conversions are critical for tracking how successful your social media campaigns are. If you're a B2B marketer, they reveal how effective your social campaigns are at bringing in leads. If you're a consumer marketer, they indicate how well your social campaigns drive purchases.

Your social media platforms' native analytics, alongside website analytics platforms like Google Analytics, can reveal how many conversions each campaign generated.

For deeper insight, set up campaigns inside your marketing automation platform with a smart list or smart campaign that tracks specific parameters and reveals how many conversions each of your campaigns brought in. Once a social media user clicks on a unique URL and takes an action on that page, like downloading an infographic, it counts as a conversion. This information is captured on the back end so you can track who converted, which channel the conversion came from, the type of content used, the specific campaign that brought it in, and much more.

Retention, upsell, and cross-sell

If you're a consumer marketer conducting transactions on your website, the next set of metrics may not apply to you, since a conversion usually indicates a sale. However, remember that the customer journey doesn't end after a sale. According to eMarketer, it costs 10 times more to acquire new customers than to sell to the ones you already have. And based on data from Bain & Company, a 5 percent increase in retention yields a 25 percent to 95 percent increase in profits. Plan a strategy around customer marketing—retention, cross-sell, and upsell—to maximize the lifetime value of your hard-won customers.



Mid-stage metrics

To increase interaction with your company, your mid-stage content should be educational and engaging. The data you previously collected on your social media campaign conversions will be critical to measuring the metrics for this stage as well as your late stage content.

You'll need the ad targeting from a marketing automation platform to help prospects along their journey—and to build your pipeline.

Be sure to track the following metrics:

Marketing qualified leads (MQLs): These are prospects who have reached an agreed-upon threshold based on your lead scoring, which takes into account their overall fit, behaviors, and interests.

Sales qualified leads (SQLs): These are your prospects who've been qualified by sales as good leads.

Opportunity: Once a potential customer becomes an SQL, they get further qualified by sales. If they determine there's a sales opportunity, these prospects become an official opportunity in your system. Opportunities can take a while to develop since they factor in a buyer's interactions with your brand. So it's important to fill your pipeline with as many good leads as possible to generate more customer opportunities.

Pipeline: This indicates how many leads your social campaign brought in. At Adobe, our golden metric for a good campaign is one that generates pipeline at least five times the amount of cost.

Late-stage metrics

At this point, you'll begin to see how your social media campaigns contribute directly to revenue. Track the following late-stage metrics to tie your social campaigns to ROI:

Opportunities won: See the number of closed-won deals that your campaign achieved.

Revenue won: Find out the exact dollar amount of the deal size that your campaigns brought in.

Customer lifetime value (CLV): Understand the total value that your relationship with a customer brings your company across the entire customer lifecycle.

As buyers engage more and more with your brand, make the most of the information you've collected by targeting them with a narrower focus. A broad approach that reaches many buyers is appropriate for the early stages. But once you have their attention, you can narrow in and hit on their unique interests and needs with powerful marketing technology solutions.



10. Putting it all together

Today, it's not enough just to be on social media. You need to be actively engaging with your audience—building your network, sharing content, asking your audience to share, participating in conversations, and responding to comments.

As social media adoption continues to rise, an omnichannel social media marketing strategy is essential to your brand's success. You can't afford to be absent from conversations about your brand, especially when your competitors are part of them. Now that you understand how to develop a social media marketing strategy, you'll be able to engage your customers at each stage of the journey and create relevant content that drives your objectives forward.

A solid strategy doesn't shy away from experimentation to achieve your goals. Technology will help your team adapt and iterate quickly, and it will enable you to understand how cross-channel, continuous conversations with your audience on social media platforms ultimately contribute to reaching your objectives.

Change is constant in social media. Ensure your strategy can stand the test of time by defining your goals, testing, and adapting the activities you do to support your strategy over time. The right strategy for one brand may be different than another, so craft one that aligns with your goals and make sure it's attainable based on your resources.

With the right strategy—one that guides buyers further along the customer journey and identifies social media marketing tactics and platforms that are right for your organization—you'll ultimately bring more revenue to the table.

Adobe Experience Cloud

Adobe Experience Cloud is the most comprehensive suite of customer experience management tools on the market. With solutions for data, content, engagement, commerce, personalization, and more, Experience Cloud is built on the world's first platform designed explicitly for customer experience. Each product is infused with artificial intelligence and works seamlessly together, but also integrates with your existing technology and your future innovations so you can consistently deliver the right experience every time.

Marketo Engage

Marketo Engage specializes in customer engagement over complex B2B buying journeys. As a complete solution for lead management, it brings marketing and sales together to nurture leads, orchestrate personalized experiences, optimize content, and measure business impact across every channel. Marketo Engage natively supports both demand and account-based marketing strategies, providing a single, integrated lead management platform from acquisition to advocacy. Build engaging, personalized experiences at scale and prove impact with Marketo Engage.

